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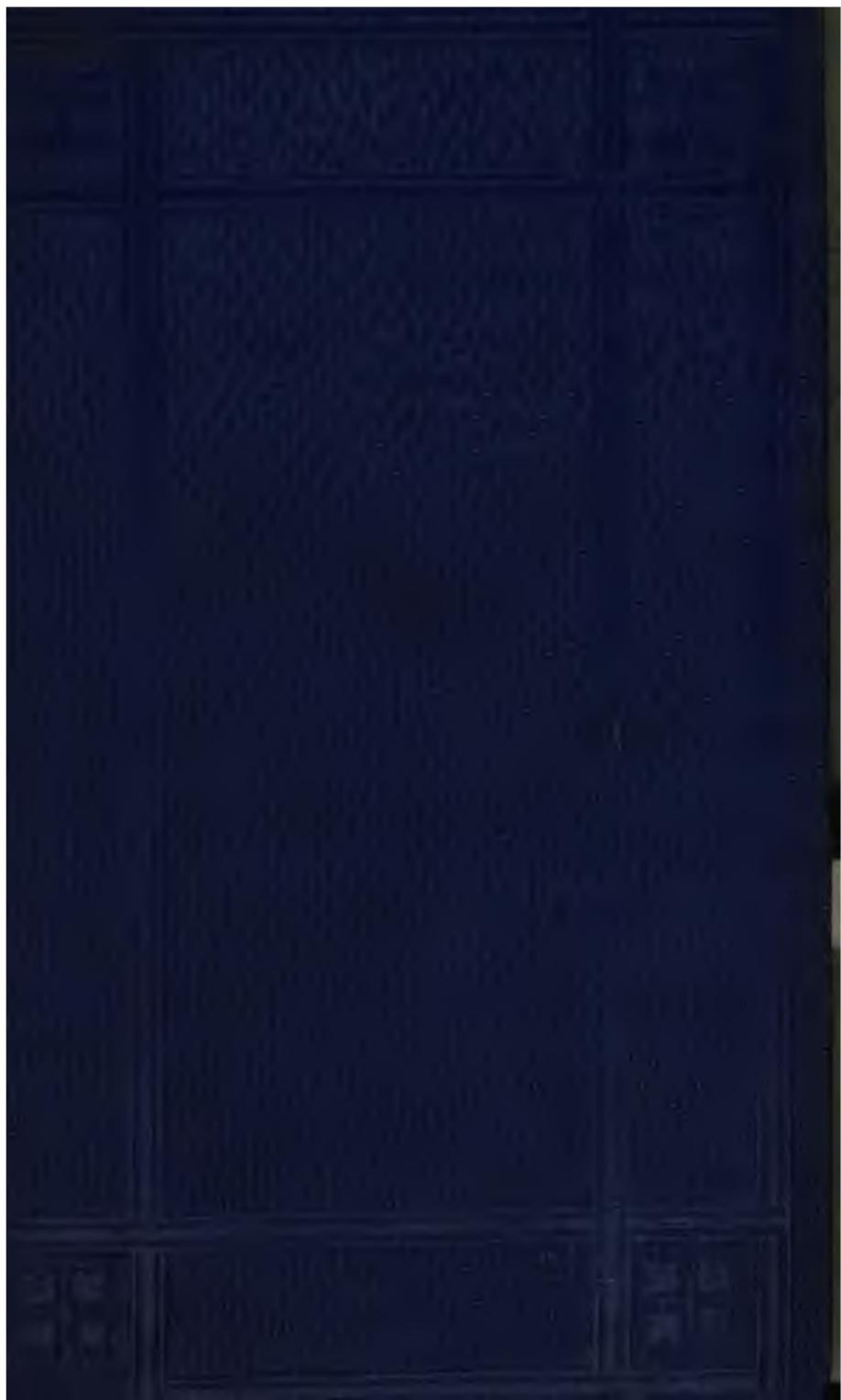
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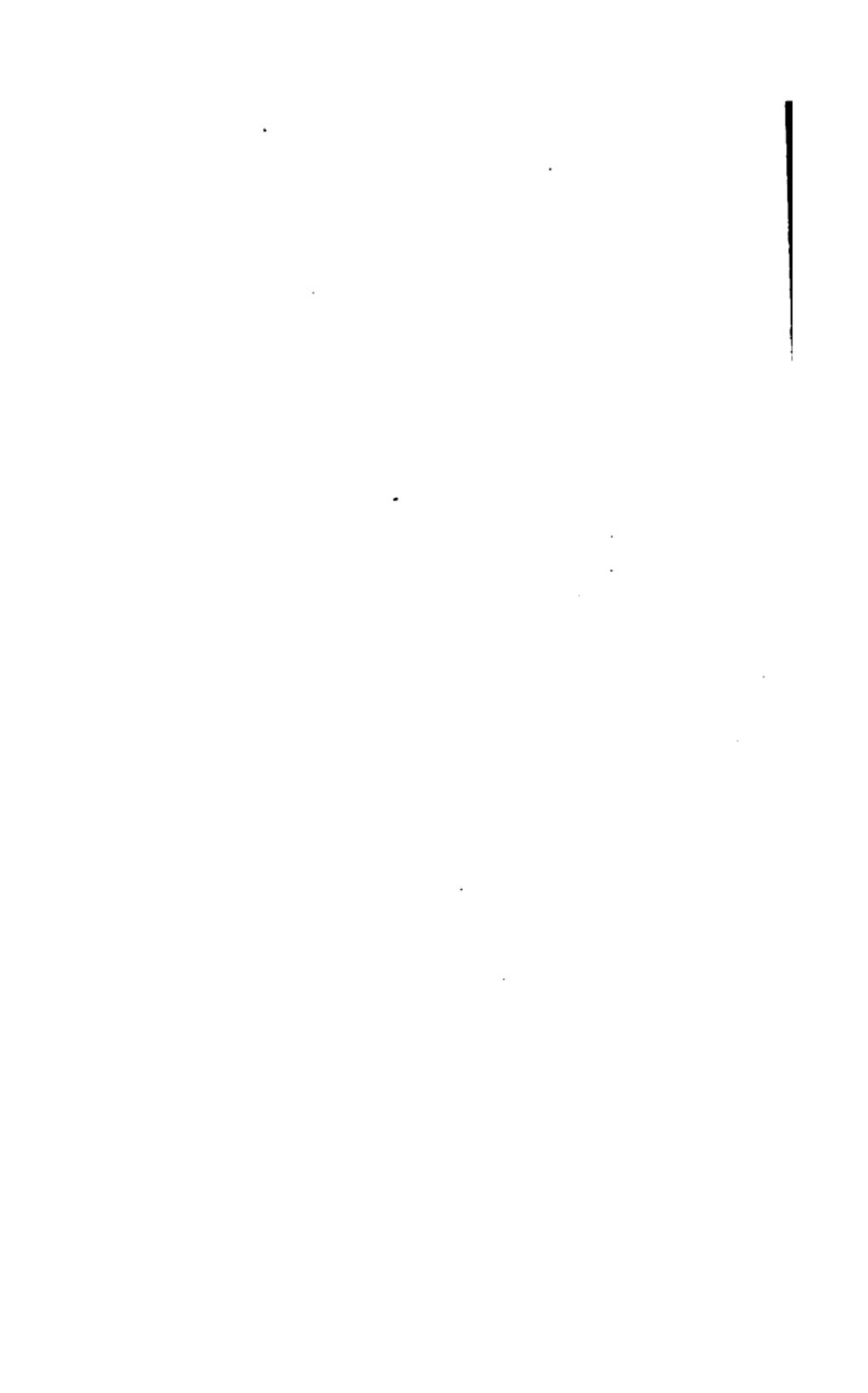
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THE
MIDNIGHT CRY.

BY THE

REV. SAMUEL GARRATT,

MINISTER OF TRINITY CHURCH, LITTLE QUEEN STREET, LINCOLN'S-INN-FIELDS; AUTHOR OF "THE DAWN OF LIFE."

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MDCCLXI.



TO

HIS MOTHER,

IN JOYFUL EXPECTATION OF THAT

BLESSED MORNING WHEN THE DAY SHALL BREAK

AND THE SHADOWS FLEE AWAY,

This Volume

IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED,

BY

THE AUTHOR.





P R E F A C E.

IN committing this book to the press, it is my desire and prayer that many who read it may be led, by God's blessing on it, to Him, whose Coming in glory is the hope of the Church. I make no apology for mingling together things earthly and things heavenly—the history of the world with the expectation of the saints—because, if I am right in thinking that God has done so, it must be right, and must be wise. In that portion of the book which is occupied with those prophecies on which so many minds have been employed, I have wished, where possible, to assign the interpretation to its right author, and if I have failed in so doing, it has been through mistake. Whatever is new has been the result of *very long study*. I cannot but feel that some

of these interpretations, if I am correct in them, are important, as warning God's people of coming dangers, and encouraging them under coming trials.

These are "times of refreshing" from the presence of the Lord, in which he is gathering souls in many lands, and making many of his own people shine more brightly. I believe he is housing his sheep before the storm—that ere long it will be midnight—and that in that stormy night the cry will be heard, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh!" May reader and writer be ready then with burning lamps to go forth and meet him!

December, 1860.

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THE MIDNIGHT CRY.

CHAPTER I.

WISE AND FOOLISH.

THE purpose of prophecy is to prepare the Church of God for coming events, for coming trials, and for the coming of her Lord. "None of the wicked shall understand," God said to Daniel; and Jesus, when announcing to his disciples the persecutions which his people would have to endure between his first and second advents, added, "These things have I told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye may remember what I told you of them."

We cannot neglect the warnings of Scripture without great danger. We may be quite sure that God has written nothing in vain. It is not for nothing that so large a portion of his Word is occupied in what men of the world pronounce unmeaning hieroglyphics; and it is a symptom of much significance, that these symbolic representations have engaged the attention of so many Christian men, and drawn forth so large an amount of diligent labour and sanctified learning. It is my full

conviction that no honest attempt at unfolding the prophetic pages has been devoid of success ; that each fresh commentator has been permitted to contribute his share of sound interpretation ; that, on certain points, Mede, and the Newtons, and Faber, and Elliott, have clearly each of them grasped a portion of truth, and as clearly each of them made mistakes on other points ; that the futurist writers, when their aim has been to investigate God's purpose respecting Israel, and not, as has been the case with some of them, to shield the great apostasy from its deserved condemnation, have thrown great light on some very dark corners of the field ; and that nothing at this time can be more utterly vain than to profess to bring forward a new scheme of general prophetic interpretation. But the subject is not by any means exhausted ; we have to put together and harmonize the discoveries of different investigators, and there are subjects still open to fresh discovery, and on which the student of God's Word may hope to throw fresh light. Taking for granted what may be looked on as established truth, I want to use it for those purposes of warning or encouragement for which it was designed, and then to explore further. It is my full conviction that truth of the utmost present importance, which has not yet received its due attention, is involved in parts of prophecy as yet misinterpreted ; and if my view of the coming future, as will appear in subsequent chapters, is different from that of many dear brethren, and I see midnight approaching before the daybreak for which we are longing, and danger in certain tendencies which they hail as symptoms of good, it is no reason for withholding what I think, since truth *is everything*.

In no part of the Oracles of God is more truth concealed than in the parables. It does not lie so distinctly on the surface as in some other parts. We have to dig for it as for hid treasure, and must be contented to find it after diligent search. It is one of those mysterious things which we cannot fully understand, why our Lord spoke so much in parables. His own explanation of it only makes the subject more mysterious, and shows us that it is not to be referred to any ordinary cause, but sprung out of the very depths of the divine counsels. But one thing is quite clear, that he did not do it in order to discourage examination. On the contrary, to stimulate this, though not the only or the primary reason, is one very important end answered by his so doing. We must not neglect the parables because they present some difficulties. It is of the utmost moment to know all that Jesus intended to teach us. We must study what he has said in parables as well as what he has said plainly; and it will sometimes be found that the richest vein lies lowest, and that the crop is largest when we have turned up the sub-soil.

The Parable of the Ten Virgins is one of three which were spoken by our Lord in immediate connection with that prophecy in which he spanned the interval between his first and second advents. There is additional interest in them, from the circumstance that they may be looked on as, in one sense, the conclusion of his ministry; for though he did afterwards speak those beautiful words to his disciples after his last supper, recorded in St. John's Gospel, yet these belong more to his final act of atonement and reconciliation—they come in close connection with his death. His life of teaching *may be* looked upon as closing with the Pro-

phecy on the Mount and the parables accompanying it. He gave his disciples a glimpse into the future, drew for them a vivid sketch of the events accompanying his coming in glory, and added these three parables to teach further truth, important for them, and perhaps still more important for ourselves.

First, we must look at the Parable of the Ten Virgins itself. It places us in the midst of an oriental marriage. This takes place at night by torch-light or lamp-light. The friends of the bride accompany the marriage procession with torches or lamps. In the parable there are ten of these young maidens waiting for the bridegroom's coming. It is probable they were waiting with the bride, who is not mentioned, and accompanied her when the bridegroom came with his friends to fetch her home. This must have been one of the most familiar scenes to the Jew. Again and again he had watched these marriage processions. And our Lord seized on the circumstance to illustrate the greatest of all events to happen on our earth.

The ten virgins had gone forth to meet the bridegroom. They had each of them left their own homes and come to the house of the bride, with the avowed intention of showing the bridegroom honour. No mention is made of the bride, because it would have spoiled the parable to speak of her. The bride is the Church; so are the wise virgins: and both could not, without confusion, have been mentioned together. These ten virgins all came together for the same purpose. Most likely they all wore the same dress, were nearly the same age, in general appearance were much alike, and seemed to those who saw them undistinguishable. Each *carried a lamp*, and it appears that each of their lamps

was, to begin with, lighted; unless, indeed, which is perhaps more likely, they did not begin to light them till the cry was made announcing the bridegroom coming. But their lamps they all took. So far they exactly resembled each other, and any one who only saw so much, and only knew so much, would have had no right to draw any line of demarcation between them.

But there was a difference notwithstanding—five of them were wise and five were foolish. This does not relate simply to the act subsequently described; if it had, it would have been sufficient to have mentioned the act. The act was but a result of the general character. It was the general character of five of them to be wise and of five of them to be foolish; and while, as far as the language of the prophecy is concerned, it is quite possible to suppose them ignorant of one another's character, it is also quite possible to suppose them acquainted with it. Indeed, the act by which this wisdom or folly was shown was of a nature which hardly admitted of concealment. "They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them; but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps." It is hardly possible to suppose that the conversation subsequently recorded was the only or the first conversation on the subject. We may well imagine it to have been a topic of discussion beforehand. It is difficult, indeed, to imagine what reason the foolish virgins could give for taking their lamps without taking oil. Did they think the wicks would burn of themselves? Was the oil too heavy and troublesome? Had they never considered how they might obtain it? Were they careless about the whole *matter*? One thing is quite certain—

they had no good reason for their neglect, and it was a most decisive proof of folly. "They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them; but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps."

The real difference, amidst seeming resemblances, is the lesson which this part of the parable teaches us.

The marriage represents the marriage of the Lamb. In the previous chapter Christ foretold the day of his appearing, when he will come to take his people to himself. That is the marriage-day of the Church, and it is to that period our parable refers—"Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins." The kingdom of heaven here signifies outward Churches, consisting of all who profess and call themselves Christians, whether they are really so or not. They have a certain resemblance to one another in what is external. All claim some sort of connection with the Saviour, and some expectation of eventual salvation. In the parable all waited for the bridegroom's coming, and in the reality all say that they hope they shall be safe at last; but the difference is this, that the one possess that which the others possess not. Each of the wise virgins had a vessel full of oil. The foolish virgins must have said, "It is unnecessary, we shall do well enough without it; we shall not want it; our lamps will burn though untrimmed;" or, "We do not need our lamps at all, but can go in without them;" or, "It will be time enough to think about the oil when we require it." And the wise must have said, "Now is the time for being ready. We must not leave anything to be done when the bridegroom comes. We are commanded to carry a lamp, and it must be lighted. We *must have oil in our vessels with our lamps.*" Here

was the difference. So there is a difference now. All who call themselves Christians are not alike; some are wise and some are foolish; some believe the declarations of God's Word and act upon them, others do not; some possess what others possess not; and on a larger scale, and respecting more important matters, the history of the wise and foolish virgins is repeated in the history of souls.

To bury the real difference among seeming resemblances has ever been the design of Satan, and it is one which falls in too well with the wishes of man's natural heart not to find support there. It is one of the favourite errors of the day, that there is no wide distinction between one man and another. The effort is to break down the barrier between the church and the world. This has always been done practically by sin, it is now sought to do it theoretically by error.

There was much that was good in these five foolish virgins. It was a good thing to go forth to meet the bridegroom; it was a good thing to wait for him with the others; it was a good thing to have lamps, which, if there had only been oil, might have shone; and it is quite easy to see how, if a passing stranger had looked at these ten, and had heard one of them say to another, "Unless you do as we have done, you will be shut out from the marriage," he might have thought it unreasonable, perhaps unkind. Now, there are those who act upon this principle—they say, "You draw a strong line of demarcation, and assert that unless a man is on one side of it he will be shut out from the marriage supper of the Lamb. But see how much there is that is good in those *whom you exclude*. They are members of the

same families, they worship in the same churches. How amiable is this one's conduct; how powerful is that one's intellect; what learning, what industry, what powers of thought there are in that man whom you speak of as perishing, or at least who certainly does not possess what you say is essential to salvation. There is good in men of all kinds; there is something to admire in those who have no Christianity at all; much more in those who are Christians by profession, and have all these advantages, but want something or another you choose to consider necessary. Their lamps are bright now; do you mean to tell us that their lamps will ever go out?" So it might have been said of the foolish virgins; alike in everything else, they only were distinguished in this, "They that were foolish took their lamps, but took no oil with them; but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps." That one distinction made all the difference.

"Five of them were wise and five were foolish." Some are enlightened by the Spirit, while others have their understandings darkened. This illumination by the Holy Ghost is quite independent of all ordinary knowledge and intelligence. It may be possessed by a child or an untaught man, and be wanting to the philosopher. It is by no means true that the great men of this world, or the celebrated men of this world, or the intellectual giants of this world generally have it; nor is the fact that they have it not one which ought to surprise or stagger the believer. It is exactly what God himself has taught us to expect—"Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called; *but God hath called the foolish things of the world to*

confound the wise." "For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God." While, on the other hand, God does, by his own Spirit, enlighten many whom men count unenlightened, and makes those wise whom men count fools. In the eye of God there is just the same distinction among us which there was among the ten virgins—some are wise and some are foolish. There is the opened eye and the understanding heart, and there is the darkened mind which cannot see the things of God. You remember what our Lord said when he had given sight to the blind man who went and washed in the pool of Siloam, "I am come that those who see not might see, and that those who see might be made blind." He does by his Spirit make this broad distinction between one and another, that some are enlightened to know and understand the truth, while others remain in ignorance of it; and it is still the fact that some are wise and some are foolish.

The wise and foolish virgins did not equally believe what had been said to them. Whatever was the reason why the foolish virgins acted as they did, it must have originated in their not believing it necessary to take oil. They would not give credit to what they were told. Unbelief it is which keeps men from salvation. It is this which makes the distinction between one and another—the taking God at his word, and believing him to mean what he says, and not doing so. Here was the first temptation, "Hath God said?" and though God hath said it, "Ye shall not surely die." It was the questioning God's word which brought with it sin—the sin of the world. And this believing or not believing it is which even now divides the saved from the *unsaved*. Whoever takes God at his word

is wise, and whoever does not take God at his word is foolish.

Look at those two young men. Both hear the truth, that the wages of sin is death. One believes it. It makes him restless; he feels sin like an intolerable load weighing him down; his heart is heavy, and will not allow him any rest; he carries about with him from place to place this painful consciousness that he is in danger, for he believes what God has said, that the wages of sin is death. So far he is wise. The other hears it and disregards it. He thinks no more about it. In some way he makes light of the warning, and treats it as if it were untrue. He is foolish.

There are two sisters; both are feeling the pressure of sin; it has been impressed on their conscience by the Spirit; and both hear the invitation of Christ, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." One of them listens to it—remembers who it is who speaks it—feels sure that she cannot be wrong in acting upon it—goes to Jesus and is saved. Surely she is wise. Not so the other. It is for others—it is for those who desire it—it is for my sister, not for me. She does not believe it—she does not act upon it—does not go to Jesus. Then she is foolish.

If the five foolish virgins had believed what was said to them, and acted accordingly, they would have shown themselves wise. It is this unbelief of God's word, this explaining it away, this disregard of it which shows such folly; as though man knew better than God, the creature than the Creator. We must believe what God has spoken. Then when Christ comes, at the marriage supper of the Lamb, we shall

be found among those that are wise, not among those that are foolish.

The wise virgins possessed, while the foolish virgins possessed not, oil in their vessels with their lamps.

We may understand this in different ways.

First, there is the simple fact that the one had that which the other had not. This is true of those who are believers and those who are not so. There is a difference in their present possessions. It is not the future only which is different, but the present. God's children have blessings now, more or less secret, which distinguish them from all others.

They alone have forgiveness. This precious blessing they carry about with them, and it forms their hope of everlasting blessedness. None but they have it. However like in other respects, none but Christ's own people are washed in his blood, and set free from the guilt of their sins. This most necessary blessing for present happiness and future glory is peculiar to them. It is their possession, and worth worlds.

They alone have salvation. No profession will stand in the place of that. The lamp which does not burn, the soul which has the form of godliness without the power of it, is worthless. Believers are saved. There is life within. A spark has been communicated from above which will never go out, but burn on for ever. It may be, and often is, hidden under a mass of corruption. But there it is, and its being there makes all the difference. They have life, while others have it not. For "he that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."

They alone have peace with God. All others are at

enmity with God, and exposed to God's righteous anger. These men have been brought nigh, reconciled to God, are no longer enemies, but friends. They are actually now at peace with him. The only war they have to wage is against sin. They possess an agreement, written in the blood of God's own Son, and declared, by Him who cannot lie, unchangeable. The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will show them his covenant.

They alone have a title to glory. God himself has given it to each believer. It may sometimes be out of sight, but it is in reality always in possession, and sometimes he feels especially its value. It does sometimes greatly cheer him and animate him as he walks along his course. It is his exclusive privilege. Gladly would he make others share it, but it is his only who is wise unto salvation.

Many things the believer has which none have besides. For each of these peculiar gifts he has unspeakable reason to be thankful. And how deeply should the thought sink into the hearts of every unconverted one—"Others have that which I have not. They have forgiveness—they have salvation—they have a title to glory. I have it not. Oh! will you be like a foolish virgin, and go on without that the want of which will be ruin when Christ comes? There is not one of these things you can dispense with then. Before it is too late seek for these inestimable blessings, that when he comes you may be ready to meet him.

We may next look upon the oil in the vessels as a type especially of the Spirit in the heart. Oil is so employed in Scripture. In all its various uses it forms a beautiful *emblem of the Spirit's work*. It is with oil that the

flame must be fed. So it is with the Spirit's influence alone that the flame of godliness in the heart can be lit, or kept alive. Those who are wise, made wise from above, have the Spirit dwelling in them. As it was by him they were originally brought to Christ, so is the Spirit Christ's gift to them. They have been "sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the promised possession, unto the praise of his glory." The oil of the Spirit is the hidden source of all the outward light which the Christian sheds around him. But for that his lamp must inevitably go out. But he possesses a supply of oil with which its light may be sustained. That which the wise virgins carried with them was a limited supply, though it lasted long enough to answer their purpose. But this heavenly oil is supplied to us without limit. It is given without measure to Christ for his Church, and Christ's people receive from him as much as they can need.

This exhaustless supply of grace is the privilege of all believers. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his." They all possess this blessing. Theirs is not the outward form of a religious profession. It is the inward reality of a heart in which God's Spirit dwells, which is sanctified by him, and by him made to shine as a light-house in the world.

This blessing accompanies salvation. All whom God saves from guilt he renews by his Spirit. He makes them in this way his for ever; and though sometimes their lamp may need trimming, and the flame may seem to flicker in the socket, it will continually be revived by the power of the Holy Ghost. The

oil will be poured into the flame, and it will burst forth afresh. When the heart is cold and lifeless, when you are not longing for your Lord's return, when every grace burns dimly, then seek anew for a fresh pouring forth of oil from on high. Seek for that indwelling of the Spirit which is essential to your being a light-bearer at all. He gives all grace to those who seek it from him. Oh, to have him pouring in the precious oil, and making his own grace effectual in building up his people !

This oil of grace distinguishes those who are Christ's from all besides. We read in Exodus that the greatest care was taken in preparing the oil for the use of the tabernacle. It was to be beaten oil, well mixed, and of the purest kind, compounded of the most precious spices ; and it was death to imitate it. Whether this anointing oil was also used in the tabernacle lamps I do not know ; but the oil of grace is, like it, most precious, most holy, and cannot be imitated. It forms the grand difference by which, among many resemblances, the wise are distinguished from the unwise. Each believer carries it with him. He is not contented with the name of Christian, nor does he only bear the lamp of an outward godliness ; his is not that religious profession which is destitute of all hidden support, and must fade away when it is most required ; but God himself feeds his flame. He gives him a vessel like that of the prophet's widow, which, as long as it is wanted, will pour forth oil. The Spirit dwells in his heart to nourish the spark which he has kindled, and though sometimes the flame dwindle and seems ready to die, it is ever found to revive again. He has oil in his vessel with his lamp. He has grace in the heart to

leep alive his light, and when the Bridegroom cometh, e will be ready, standing with his lamp burning in is hand.

We have been considering the wise and foolish irgins, not as they will be when Christ comes, but as ey are even now. Even now, while mingled together, nd often undistinguishable by others, among many re-emblances there is a most real distinction—the oil in ie vessel—grace in the heart.

Have I oil in my vessel ? If I have oil in my vessel, shall be sure to value it. Some deny the need of the pirit's influence in the heart ; they seem to think they an light the flame within, and keep it burning, by their wn efforts. Surely they do not possess what they egard so little. If you do not pray for the Spirit, nor eek for the Spirit, and desire the gift of the Spirit, it because you have it not. You know not the worth f the oil, and, therefore, it is certain that it is not ours.

Have I oil in my vessel ? If so, I shall watch lest lose the precious possession. There may be, as in the ase before us, periods of unwatchfulness ; but the areful guarding of the gift is one great proof of having . The foolish virgin had nothing to preserve. She ould not fear to lose that which she had not got. But he wise virgin must have felt a trembling anxiety lest er oil should be taken away before the bridegroom ame.

Oh, it is well to fear lest we should grieve the pirit. That is a godly fear which leads the man to ry, “Take not thy Holy Spirit from me.” It shows ie genuineness of grace when it makes its possessor arful of losing it. *By this godly jealousy over a man's*

self God prevents him from so doing. He keeps his people watchful in order to keep them safe, and makes those afraid of grieving the Spirit whom the Spirit seals unto the day of redemption.

Have I oil in my vessel ? Then I must keep my lamp burning. Whatever may have been the conduct of the wise or foolish virgins, our business is to be always watching for our Lord's returning. We are to be ready for the Bridegroom, come when he may. It does not become the Christian to keep his lamp untrimmed and his light feeble. How bright a prospect lies before us ! We are going to partake of the marriage supper of the Lamb. Ere long the pearly gates of the New Jerusalem will unfold to let us in. But we cannot go without our lamps. They must be burning when our Lord arrives. Then let us watch them carefully, and feed them diligently, that each of us, when he comes, may be found ready to go forth to meet him.

Have you no oil ? It is not now too late to seek for it. Now it may be bought without money and without price. Christ is the Giver of the Spirit. Oh! if you feel a longing desire for that best gift, it need not remain unsatisfied. Christ by his atoning work has purchased the blessing, and by his intercession pours it down upon his people. Go to him for the oil of grace, and he will not disappoint you. He walks in the midst of the golden candlesticks to feed the lighted lamps, and kindle fresh ones. Take your empty vessels to him, and he will fill them. Foolish you may have been, but he can make you wise now, only go at once ; " For we know not the day nor the hour that the Son of Man cometh." And then the distinction will be eternal.

wise and foolish virgins will then separate for ever.
be persuaded to choose that better part which
not be taken away from you. Be wise to-day.
one day the wise shall shine as the brightness of
jewelment.

CHAPTER II.

A SLUMBERING CHURCH.

WE have now arrived at the prophetical part of the parable. The verses which we considered in the last chapter had no distinct reference to the future more than to the present. It was the condition of disciples in our Lord's day, as well as in ours, to be looking for the marriage-day of the Church, and throughout the intervening ages there always have been wise and foolish virgins, Christians in reality and Christians in name, men with grace in the heart and men without it. So far the parable belongs alike to every age.

But it was not then the Bridegroom could be said to tarry. While Christ was upon earth the Bridegroom was still with them, and when he had ascended into heaven they expected his speedy return. But the prophecy was given by the apostle, that "there would arise in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for, since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." It is to this state of things the first clause of our text referred. Those who heard the parable could attach but little weight to the expression. They did not know, and *could not* know, how long it would be before the coming

he Heavenly Bridegroom. It needed the lapse of sixteen centuries to unfold fully the meaning of the parables. We know now what they signify. We look back through a long succession of ages. In each his people have more or less looked for him, but he has not come.

He does still tarry. The unfaithful servant is bold enough to say, "My Lord delayeth his coming." The scoffer asks triumphantly, "Where is the promise of his coming?" And it needs the exercise of faith to bear the weariness of expectation long delayed.

"While the bridegroom tarried they all slumbered and slept." This is the one point of agreement noted between the wise and foolish virgins. It is quite evident that much care is requisite in interpreting this part of our parable, not to run counter to other parts of scripture.

There is a sense in which the Christian may sleep. "I will lay me down in peace and take my rest, for it is thou, Lord, only that makest me dwell in safety," says the psalmist. And Paul declares, "We which have believed do enter into rest." In this sense of rest, peace, quietness, the wise virgins might sleep wisely, while the foolish virgins slept foolishly. Anxiety, restlessness, troubles the unconverted, but does not become the converted. When a man has committed his soul to Jesus, he need be under no apprehension whatever. And as a traveller can sleep when all is packed up, and he is ready to start at a moment's notice; or the general can sleep when his dispositions are made, though on the eve of battle, so the Christian may be, ought to be, at rest in the anticipation of Christ's coming, and enjoying the presentiment of that promise, "So he giveth his beloved ones."

On the other hand, the very same quietness which is right in the Christian is madness in the man without Christ. His lamp is not burning—he is not ready for the Bridegroom's coming. He has no oil. Then to sleep is to perish. He ought to be seeking mercy, and earnestly looking after those things which are needful. It is possible that the wise and foolish virgins may do the very same things, and that in the one it may be wisdom, and in the other folly. We cannot be too careful in bearing in mind the personal distinction between the child of God and the child of this world. We cannot address the same words to both. The duty of the one is by no means necessarily the duty of the other. We must alarm the one and encourage the other. We must speak to the one of approaching ruin, and invite the other to tranquil confidence. And we might in this sense understand the words we are considering as expressing that state of mind which was suitable to the wise virgins, but fatal to the foolish, that persuasion of all being right which enables a man to go to sleep to awake with joy, if he is so, and with shame if he is not so.

There is a sense in which the Christian cannot sleep. "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light," is God's call to the unconverted. The believer is awake while all other men are asleep in sin, ignorance, and forgetfulness of God. It cannot be in this sense that it is said, "While the bridegroom tarried they all slumbered and slept." There was between the two companies all the difference of wise and foolish, of converted or unconverted. In this sense the five were awake, and the other five were *asleep*. *It is of the very essence of conversion to be*

alive unto God—to have awakened from sleep. The saved sinner is like one who has been roused from sleep by an alarm of shipwreck. He wakes up and finds everything going to pieces; there is not a plank on which he can swim. But then he is awake and ready to seize the first opportunity of escape; and presently he springs, by a desperate venture, on some motionless rock. He is safe there, and safe for ever—while to sleep during the shipwreck is to go down into the deep. It is not in this sense it can be said alike of the wise and foolish virgins, “they all slumbered and slept.”

There is yet one other sense in which the Christian ought not to sleep, but sometimes does sleep. “Let us not sleep as do others.” Now in this sense there is danger lest the believer should sleep as others do. “Brother,” said an eminent Christian, on his deathbed, to a Christian friend, “we are only half awake.” Though in one sense God’s children are awake, in another sense they are not awake. It is the tendency of everything around us to send us to sleep. It is quite plain that even Christian men are only partially awake. One of the most seductive arguments against evangelical truth is drawn from this very circumstance. It is often said that if Christian men really believed what they professed, they could not act and speak and feel as they do. It is said that the doctrines we teach are such that, if carried out to their legitimate consequences, every man would find the thought of any one he loved being still unconverted too intolerable a burden to be borne. The same men, who are ready enough to denounce zeal as fanaticism, and who are appalled at the spectacle now presented in Ireland of a whole province alive to the importance of eternal things, yet tell us

that if we really believed what we teach, it would turn the world upside down ; and that nobody believes it, and therefore it is not true.

We accept the objection. It is indeed the case, that the legitimate result of the truths of the Bible is to turn the world upside down ; that a full realization of man's sinfulness—of eternal life and eternal death—of the absolute necessity of salvation—of the reality of conversion—of the immeasurable, though in this life not impassable, gulf between the lost and the saved, is well fitted, must certainly result in such a strenuousness of effort, such a wrestling with evil, such a longing after souls, such a resolution to rouse up one's neighbours, as if they were in a house on fire or a sinking ship, such as never has been seen yet; and that a Christian with his eyes open would see madness in much which is reckoned prudence, and soberness in much that is counted madness. But the right inference is, that Christians are not awake, but too much in this respect like others; that, like the wise virgins, they also, while the Bridegroom tarries, slumber and sleep. There is much in this to make us ashamed—nothing to make us surprised. Our Lord in this parable foretold it should be so. The prospect before us is enough to stir up all the heart; but it does so only half, because we are only half awake to it.

A slumbering Church lets its light grow dim. In the parable we cannot help supposing that when the wise virgins trimmed their lamps they made them burn much brighter. While they were sleeping they were growing paler and paler ; and it must be frankly owned that such has been too much the case with all Christ's people. Surely the light they have carried has not been

very bright one. There has not been the love, and the joy, and the peace, and the other fruits of the Spirit, which there should have been, or it would certainly have been quite otherwise. Oh, what a light we might have shed around us had we been awake and trimming our lamps, instead of slumbering and sleeping.

A slumbering Church makes small efforts for the conversion of others. If the wise virgins had time to regret anything, surely it was that they had been sleeping instead of persuading the foolish virgins to go and procure oil while the bridegroom tarried. I have said that no doubt the conversation about the oil when the bridegroom came was not the first conversation on the subject. And yet, if the five wise virgins were like too many of us, it might have been. How often have we omitted to warn our fellow-sinners, to beseech them to fly from the wrath to come, to point them to the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. When there is a revival, it is an awakening of believers in this matter. So conspicuous is this result, that some have attempted to trace the revival to this as its cause. But that is an error. I am persuaded it is the result of it, not the cause of it. In a Church awakened by God's Spirit, men shake off that unmanly fear which keeps them from speaking to their friends of Him whom they themselves love and trust in. How much are we responsible for through our neglect of souls. We slumber on, and in the meanwhile the Bridegroom is at hand, and our brothers and sisters are sleeping without the hope that we have. It may have been that relationship existed between the wise and foolish virgins. One sister may have been wise, and the other sister may have been foolish. What a reflection for the

wise one that she had gone on selfishly slumbering, with her oil all ready, and allowed her sister to sleep away the only time in which she could have bought any for herself. And surely, if in that moment of unutterable joy, when the Church is summoned up to meet her returning Lord, one painful feeling shall cross the heart of any saved one, will it not be this—"I might have spoken to my brother, my sister, my child, my friend, but I was slumbering then, and it is too late now." At all events, think of it now, while it is not too late; and, if any have no oil, beseech them to procure it while yet there is time.

A slumbering church forgets her Lord's return. The five wise virgins seem almost like the five foolish ones, to have forgotten why they had gone forth. Such has been, and still is, too much the case with Christians. For a long period in the Church's history, few even of Christ's own people thought much of his second advent. Many of them never think of it now at all. In whatever respect they may be awake, in this respect they are asleep. This is perhaps the most direct meaning of the phrase. They, like the rest, are too forgetful of the coming day. I admit that this is less so now than it was. The parable does not say that at all times the sleep was equally deep. It may be a broken slumber. And now there are many of God's children looking forward with earnest longing to the coming of the Bridegroom. Still, on the whole, surely it is true that we have been all too much asleep. A deep thorough conviction that he is near would stir us up wonderfully. We have slumbered in the night because the Bridegroom tarrieth.

"They all slumbered and slept." Such is the true

description of what has been the state of the Church. We shall consider, further on, the meaning of the midnight cry at which all the ten virgins at once awoke. But it is quite evident that the most important thing for every one of the ten was to awake before this, and while it was yet time to see that all was right. We might suppose such an awakening among them ; and such an awakening is of all things what we most need. There will be such an awakening when the Bridegroom cometh. But then it will be too late to seek for grace. An awakening before he comes is that which is wanted.

In such an awakening or revival, men will of necessity learn to look upon themselves in some respects very differently. As each one awakes from sleep, and examines his lamp, strange discoveries will be made.

It is not only the profane and immoral, the profligate, the swearer, the Sabbath-breaker, who will be aroused to a sense of sin, and made conscious of the need of salvation. The foolish virgins are much more like those who make a religious profession, who know something of God's truth, who are not indifferent altogether to eternal things, but who just want the thing —are almost, but not altogether, Christians.

Now, let us consider how an awakening will affect such as these.

One has considered himself a Christian because of the respectability of his conduct, and his regular attendance on the means of grace. He has put the means for the end. Coming to church, family prayers at home, the repetition of a prayer in private, coupled with general integrity and irreproachable character, have so well satisfied him that he has gone to sleep thinking himself quite safe. *To rouse up such a self-deceiver is of the*

utmost difficulty. It is altogether out of man's power, for he does, in fact, turn into poison every means of grace by resting upon it as an end. The fact of having heard the sermon which ought to have made him so anxious, makes him more secure in his own esteem. He has heard another sermon, he has attended church once more, and he never reflects that what he heard there condemns him ; and instead of being pricked to the heart by what he hears, he goes to sleep the more easily because he has heard it. But if to such a man an awakening time should come, and his slumber be mercifully broken before it is too late, all his imaginary safety will vanish. He will be compelled to own himself no nearer heaven than any other great sinner. He will discover that those means of grace which do not produce their end are but an aggravation of his sin. How great a mercy to be stirred up from that fatal slumber ! Because it is not too late now for any one awake to seek for oil to make his lamp burn. The same Saviour who has given it to the wise, can give it to you. Only seek for it while it may be found.

Another has thought herself a Christian for very different reasons. She was once made to feel her sin, and became very anxious to be saved. Under these impressions she attended religious instruction, liked to hear sermons, made a point of reading her Bible regularly, associated with some who fear the Lord, and by degrees began to persuade herself that she was one of those with whom she mingled. In this state of mind she made a profession of being a Christian, united with Christ's people at his table, and all her anxieties vanished, and she counted herself safe. There was no *insincerity* in this ; but yet there was no conversion.

She had never taken her sins to Christ to have them forgiven. Never had she found true peace in him. Circumstances were her Saviour, means of grace were her Saviour, Christian friends were her Saviour, pleasant feelings for which she could give no reason were her Saviour. She never really believed in Jesus; never found peace in the blood of his cross; never drew near to the Father in a spirit of adoption; for she was not really led of the Spirit and made a child of God. If no awakening time should come till the midnight cry is heard, she will wake up then, and notwithstanding her convictions, and her resolutions, and her amendments, and her intercourse with God's people, and her avowal of being a Christian, and her attendance at the Lord's table, find her lamp unlighted, her name unknown, and herself shut out from the marriage supper of the Lamb. To some who read this book an awakening time has come beforehand. They have found to their own surprise, and that of others, that if they had gone on sleeping they would have awaked at last unsaved. This seems to be one very prominent part of God's work at the present time. In different places he is undoing what has been imperfectly done, breaking afresh badly set bones that he may set them aright. Thank God, he is doing so, and convincing some who have been looked on as converted long ago, that during all that time they had not really come to Christ.

Another perhaps has gone on for years nourishing a suppressed anxiety, wishing to be saved, but never believing in the forgiveness of sins. The result, after a while, is one uneasy slumber. No one can be always anxious; and if anxiety remains too long, it by its own weariness brings *sleep without repose*. It does so

naturally, and it does so spiritually. I do not think that is the condition of a wise virgin, but of a foolish virgin. God forbid I should make any heart sad which God has not made sad. But I am persuaded of this, that in a time of awakening God will not allow any one to be satisfied without the belief of sin forgiven. And I think the greatest mercy he can show is to remove that spirit of slumber, and bring the soul face to face with its anxiety until it submits to be made happy. Disguise it as you will, it is pride which keeps you from accepting pardon. But whatever it be, if you awake from your sleep, and God is gracious to you, you will have no rest till you rest in Jesus.

Perhaps another may have fallen asleep in the conviction that all is right, because of the accuracy of his creed. He knows how to be saved—he can defend the truth against all opposers—he is not led away by any of the errors of the day; and yet there has been no personal appropriation of the truth he knows. He contends for the natural corruption of man, but has no conviction of sin in his own heart. He maintains the doctrine of the atonement, but has never sprinkled the atoning blood on his own conscience. He believes in the doctrine of justification by faith only, but has no faith in Christ, and therefore no justification. Many a man's religion is of this kind. Now, if an awakening time should come—if he should not be permitted to sleep on till the midnight cry—he will own himself perishing; he will admit all this in which he has trusted, and which has lulled him to sleep, to be empty indeed, without the personal application of it. There will spring up within him the earnest longing to obtain *salvation*, and perhaps, through infinite grace, he will

himself grasp the truth for himself with which, hitherto, he has only played.

There may be yet another foolish virgin. She is unlike the other four, in deceiving others rather than herself. I do not think this so common a case; but yet there are those who make a religious profession which they know to be a false one. One of these is consciously living without God, while wishing to be thought his child. Can such an one sleep? Yes; but it is sleep induced by the magic of the evil one, and the dreams are very restless. Even to such an one an awakening time may come before it is too late. The Spirit may so work in such a heart, as to make it melt in deep sorrow. He may penetrate it with an overwhelming storm, and yet give it peace. If but one such should read this page, may God awake him to a full conviction of the fearfulness of such a state. For now there is mercy even for you—even your false lamp may be filled with oil, and made a real light.

But then there are the wise virgins. Is it impossible to wake them from their sleep before they have to go forth to meet the Bridegroom? Sometimes a waking time is given them. When God is converting the unconverted, he often restores his own.

These slumbering Christians must be declining Christians. Their lamps must be growing more and more dim. But what if the Spirit should arouse them? Then the first impression will be a new conviction of sinfulness; how great the sin of forgetting God our Saviour; how great the sin of walking carelessly in his ways; how great the sin of leaving our first love. It is true that Christ will never lose one of his own sheep, nor *the Father ever cast off one of his children.*

But surely it is no wonder if a declining Christian is made to feel very bitterly the sinfulness of his course. It proves God's love towards his people, that when they sin he makes them to mourn. That is a holy mourning, in which a believer weeps for his backsliding. Then he can sleep no longer in forgetfulness and sloth. Though the Bridegroom's voice is not yet heard, he must trim his lamp and make it burn brightly. Oh what a happiness is it when once again the light of God's countenance is lifted upon his child, and that promise is fulfilled—"I will heal their backslidings, I will restore them graciously, I will love them freely."

A revival is an awakening of the slumbering virgins. God is pleased to awaken them sometimes before it is too late. He has been doing so lately in many places. It is unspeakably solemn, and yet unspeakably joyful, to know that God is himself working, and when he is pleased to work, not so much by the sermon or the large congregation, as in small meetings for prayer and mutual converse about the things of God, he seems to show so plainly that the work is his, and that he alone has done it. If hearts were melted only, or especially, when listening to some preacher's voice, man, ever ready to transfer to man what belongs to God, might have robbed him of his glory; but when the room where prayer is wont to be made becomes a Bethel, and souls are convinced, made happy, restored, with the least display of human instrumentality, then we cannot but acknowledge that "this is thy work, and that thou, Lord, hast done it."

But since it is so in a little measure now, and there *is the cloud, small, like a man's hand,* prognosticating,

we believe, the full shower, will not you who are as yet slumbering awake and see what is the state of your lamps? You, too, may find, in this season of blessing, that your supposed conversion was not a reality—that it was mere conviction, or some dream of pleasantness which rested not on Christ, and if he should again constrain you to come, as unforgiven, to the footstool of his grace, and there grant you that which you have never yet received, a pardon bought with the blood of Jesus, and sealed by the Spirit, how thankful will you be through eternity that he did not let you slumber till then, when you must have awoken without forgiveness and without hope. Or perhaps he may teach you, as he has others, how far you have wandered from him who is yet yours—make you see the dimness of your light, and pour into it fresh oil; or he may be showing you that now you are perishing, that you are hitherto a stranger to his grace. Is this the deep conviction which is forcing itself on your mind? Does a sense of sin lie heavily on your heart? Can you no longer slumber in forgetfulness? Thank God it is so. May he melt the heart of each unconverted one, and so impress it with the reality of salvation, and the danger of neglecting it, that each may fly for refuge to Christ, and seek the oil of grace before the hour of grace is over.

Men are aroused from sleep in many different ways. The text, the prayer, the hymn, the word of Christian counsel may effect it. So may the still small voice of the gospel, applied by the Spirit to the heart, with no outward instrumentality. It is in some the result of years of knocking, on Christ's part, at the door of the heart, and in others of an hour. How it is effected

matters little so that it is effected. But when the heart is awake and eternity presses on it, and there is a longing desire for peace, how is this to be obtained? My words may be read by some restless, anxious ones who want, above all things, peace. You were asleep, but are asleep no longer. You want to be sure that God and you are of one mind, that you are at peace with the moral Governor of the universe, and not exposed to the sentence of the Judge Eternal. You want to be sure that your sins are all forgiven. You want to be sure that you are safe. How could this ever be without a Redeemer, who is God as well as Man—Man as well as God? He is able to make you sure, because he has purchased your peace, obtained the forgiveness of your sins by bearing the punishment of them, and will by no means let you perish if you trust in him. Awakened souls can find no true rest but in Jesus. Seek for no other, take no other. But now accept, what he freely offers, pardon, salvation, peace with God, the oil of grace; and then go on watching, that when he cometh he may not find you sleeping.

CHAPTER III.

THE BRIDEGROOM COMETH.

THE midnight cry next invites our attention—"AND AT MIDNIGHT THERE WAS A CRY MADE, BEHOLD, THE BRIDEGROOM COMETH, GO YE OUT TO MEET HIM." The meaning of this prophecy, as a prophecy, is deeply interesting, and we must endeavour to investigate it. It is the turning point of the whole parable, and on our interpretation of it everything else depends. It may indeed be said, and has been said, that the midnight and the cry are only incidental to the emblem, and form no necessary part of that which the emblem represents. But it must be observed that though, according to Eastern custom, the marriage must take place at night, it was not at all necessary that the bridegroom should arrive at midnight. Nor does the mention of the cry seem to be required by the emblem, if not of importance in the interpretation. I believe that both are of deep and indeed to us of very peculiar interest.

But it must be observed, in the first place, that the cry, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh," is distinct from, and prior to, the coming of the Bridegroom itself. It is so distinct from it, as to leave time for the wise virgins to trim their lamps; and yet not so distinct from it as to allow the foolish virgins time to buy oil. We are therefore about to consider an event as closely connected

with the Advent as possible, and yet not altogether contemporaneous with it. Otherwise, whatever interpretation, literal or mystical, we might give to the chronological expression "midnight," would be liable to the objection, "We know not the hour when the Son of Man cometh." But you will observe that whatever sense we may attach to the word "midnight," it is not really liable to any objection of the kind; for it is not said that the Bridegroom came at midnight. The cry was made at midnight, but the Bridegroom did not come till some time after—long enough for the wise to prepare their lamps, but not long enough for the foolish to purchase the oil.

The midnight, when the cry is made, is the first point to be examined. There can, in these words, be no sort of allusion to the time of day or night at which Christ will come. It is not his coming at all which is spoken of, but the cry preceding it; and if it were his coming, since we are told expressly that "as the lightning shineth out of one part under heaven even unto the other part under heaven, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be;" and since if it is midnight in London it cannot be midnight in New York, we are absolutely forbidden from taking this singularly poor interpretation with which some have been satisfied.

'The night appears to be used for the whole period of Christ's absence from his Church. It has been more or less a time of trial, a period of temptation, and not unfrequently of persecution. It is represented under various emblems. In one place it is the season of widowhood; in another, of tribulation; and the worst portion of it is described in the book of Revelation as *the prophesying of God's witnesses in sackcloth.*

There have been times when Christian men have been disposed to look more favourably and contentedly on the present state of things. At times there has seemed an advance in godliness, or perhaps a lull in the assaults of the evil one, and they have called in question the fact of the present time being one of darkness. But no one, looking on the history of the Church as a whole, can fail to perceive it. There have been now and then a few bright flashes, but they have not been lasting. At times there have been many bright lamps shining and cheering the darkness very considerably; still, as a whole, looking at the course of ages, and looking at the breadth of the earth, it has been true all along that "darkness covers the earth, and thick darkness the nations."

We must bear this in mind. Some Christians can never forget it; so much of difficulty and darkness surrounds their path, that they are constantly reminded of it; and all must remember that such is really the state of the case. We are still in the night. The day has not yet arrived. The trials of the Church are not yet ended. It is still night till Christ comes and brings with him day.

But our parable speaks of "midnight," and if night represents the usual condition of Christ's people during Christ's absence, midnight must represent that condition in an aggravated degree. If by night we understand the tribulation of the Church all along, by midnight we must understand that tribulation intensified.

On turning to other parts of Scripture we find such to be the general tone and current of prophecy. We are led to expect the last days of the Church to be those of *its most severe affliction*. Christ comes to his

troubled people—"To you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven." It is "when the enemy shall come in like a flood" that "the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him." And in the Apocalypse—as we shall see more distinctly in a subsequent chapter—we are told of the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth that it is when they shall have finished their testimony that the beast, which ascendeth out of the bottomless pit, shall make war against them, and overcome them—teaching us to look for the Church's worst tribulation at the end of her course. This is the midnight when the cry is made.

It is not at all inconsistent, the fact that the Church's last days shall be days of persecution, with the other fact that they shall be also days of revival. The two commonly go together. A revival almost always precedes a persecution. Nothing is so little in accordance with the policy of Satan as to trouble inconsistent Christians; God may send trial on them, but it is not at all likely that Satan will send persecution. But when God is pleased to pour out his Spirit, and give new life to souls in any great numbers, be sure of this, persecution is not far behind. It was so in early apostolic days; it was so at the period of the Reformation; and if now God is gathering a fresh harvest of souls before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord, they will not be left unassailed. It is quite in keeping with God's usual method of dealing, to permit the enemy to sift as wheat the sheaves he has reaped.

I am persuaded we are approaching both of those *last events*—the last ingathering and the last persecu-

. We are approaching midnight, when for a little
e Satan will have power. There was such a time
en Jesus himself was in the garden of Gethsemane.
his," he said, "is your hour, and the power of
kness." And such a time there will be before his
ting in glory, for the cry, "Behold, the Bridegroom
eth," is to be heard at midnight.

It is very needful that Christian men should take a
rect view of the present state of things, and others

. We must not suppose that this great ingathering
l go on without interruption. It must of necessity
l up all the malice of the enemy. When an in-
idual soul escapes from his hands, he follows it with
utmost malice; and when it is not one, but many
once, it cannot but make him angry. Then he must
ow that his time is short, and we may expect him to
e down with great wrath.

Everything seems to indicate that it is to this mid-
ht of the last tribulation we are hastening; and
ough the present is night also, yet in comparison
h midnight it is day. It is the time for working;
l we may say, in anticipation of the coming midnight,
Work while it is called to-day: the night cometh
en no man can work."

If it is really true that a blessed revival, here as
ewhere, followed by a fearful persecution of God's
nts everywhere, is the prospect immediately before
how earnestly should we seek to use the one, before
enter into the other. "Now," with a double
phasis, an emphasis twice doubled, "is the ac-
ted time, and the day of salvation." In all that
d is doing now there is an unusual rapidity. Pro-
ses often spread over years are just at present

condensed into days, and even into hours. It seems as though time were pressing—as though in infinite compassion He were urging sinners to repent before the last hour—before the Church, instead of opening wide her gates to receive the stranger, bars them to keep out the enemy—before the clock strikes twelve—before the darkness of midnight, and the cry, “Behold, the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him.”

This is a thought well fitted to stir up the hearts of those who are not as yet safe in Christ. At this present moment God does seem, with most peculiar earnestness, inviting sinners to seek salvation. Never was there a time when his willingness to draw those near who are at present far off was more apparent than it is now. In how many places is he making hard hearts soft, and inclining them to seek forgiveness through the blood of the Lamb? Surely it is his doing that so many are disposed to pray. And I think, if it were possible to penetrate below the surface and see what is passing in the hearts of many who say nothing about it, we should see a restlessness, an uneasiness, an anxiety, perhaps a longing for that salvation which God has given to believers. Now, if it be true that this is to be followed by midnight—that a time is at hand when, instead of its being as it is now, a day of revival, it will be a day of persecution—how is it possible to express the importance of using what we have got while we have it. Be persuaded, if your mind has been made anxious, and you have begun to feel a desire to be saved, to remember it is now you can come to Christ, and only now. You know not how long it may be before it is too late, how soon the hour of mercy may pass away. God was

not bound to send it, is not bound to keep it. Oh ! lift up your sail to the breeze while it blows, open your vessel to receive the drops while the shower falls, catch the crested wave ere it rolls away, use the hour of grace before it is midnight. What is worse than neglected opportunities ? Better far not to have lived to such a period in the world's history as this, than to let it pass and still remain unsaved.

We have seen that though the cry which will be made at midnight is a note of preparation for the Bridegroom's coming, it is not that coming itself. But yet that it is a cry, which, while a note of warning to the wise, is a note of dismay to the foolish.

It is evidently yet future. Every warning hitherto has been an invitation, which this will not be. It seems that at the darkest period of the Church's history—at her midnight hour—in some way or other, a persuasion will be forced on the mind of all who bear the Christian name that the Bridegroom is at hand ; but that it will then be too late for those as yet unsaved to seek salvation.

How this cry will be made ; by whom it will be uttered ; in what way the conviction of its truth will be made to flash at once on the minds of wise and foolish, we are not told. But it seems to be quite distinct from any other cry ; and, when it is heard, it will produce an instant revolution in the whole current of men's minds. It does not seem to be addressed to those who make no profession whatever of being Christ's. But these it will instantly divide into two. It will separate immediately between the wise and the foolish—separate between them thoroughly and eternally since it will then be *too late to pass* from one to the other.

The cry itself is this, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh, go ye forth to meet him."

This cry has, in a certain sense, though not in the sense intimated in our text, been constantly uttered.

The expectation of Christ's coming has been constantly held out, more or less, before the Church.

In the Apocalypse, St. John, at the very commencement, said, "Behold he cometh with clouds." And the Lord Jesus himself, at the conclusion of the book, uttered these words, "Behold, I come quickly." And it is our present wisdom to remember the fact. Now is the time for making ready for that advent, and it is madness to neglect so doing.

"Behold, the Bridegroom cometh." There is one deeply immersed in this world's business. His thoughts are engaged about the future, but the future he is thinking of is a future without Christ. It is a future filled with success in his calling ; his mind is fixed on stores of wealth which he hopes to accumulate, on years of earthly enjoyment, on an old age of rest and honour, and nothing is less welcome than the thought of Christ's advent sweeping away all these visions. His present is worldly and his future is worldly. He is of the earth earthy. If he could he would have everything remain as it is. But whatever he wishes, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh." Christ is coming, and all that is great and sparkling and prosperous which is not of God will be driven away like the chaff of the summer threshing-floor. How infinitely small will much look then which now looks great. Then the earthly hope and the earthly joy and the earthly crown will grow dim and perish. And happy will it be for him who has not set his heart on these. How thoroughly would one deep conviction

hat the Bridegroom is coming change many men's estimate of everything. It is because they do not believe it, that they can go on attaching so much importance to hat which will vanish at his coming. What will it profit a man to have gained the whole world when he appears? Where will be the money and the merchandise, and the houses and the lands, when he waves his fan and gathers the wheat into his garner, and burns up the chaff with fire unquenchable? How sadly will the man who is making this world's possessions his hope or his happiness find himself mistaken when the Bridegroom cometh. Oil in the vessel, grace in the heart, will be worth worlds besides. Better then be without anything, houseless, homeless, with no provision for to-morrow, and be wise unto God, than wear a crown and dwell in a palace and find one's self in the end to have been a fool. And foolish indeed is he who layeth up treasure for himself and is not rich unto God, who is not ready for the Bridegroom's coming.

There is one to whom the pleasures of this world are so attractive that he has no desire for the marriage supper of the Lamb. He cares little for the invitation, and takes no trouble about it. Then of course to him the anticipation of Christ's coming is not one of joy. If he came to take him to his glory, it would be to separate him from all he loves best. How intolerably dull would heaven be to those whose tastes are satisfied with this world's pleasures. Grievous as it would be to be shut out, there is no possibility of enjoyment in being admitted. Therefore the coming of the Bridegroom can awaken no hope. You would rather he kept away as long as possible. Some vague and vain hope there is of not being excluded, but you have no wish for the

thing itself. The presence of Jesus has no charm for you; you care not for the hymns of angels; the sunshine of heaven has nothing in it to attract your hearts, so tied are they to what is earthly. Then you at least are not ready to welcome the cry, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh."

God is convincing some of sin. Will that conviction of sin make them glad to think that he is coming? Certainly not. Most thankful should you be that he will not let you go on sleeping. But the mere consciousness of sinfulness and desire of something better will not save you. This is the great snare which Satan lays for many souls, persuading them to rest in something short of full salvation. A man with his sins unforgiven cannot desire the Bridegroom's coming. The despairing one, who will not credit God's message of mercy, cannot desire the Bridegroom's coming. The undecided waverer, who is for halving the heart between God and Mammon, cannot desire the Bridegroom's coming. One who only wishes to be among Christians without being a Christian, cannot desire the Bridegroom's coming. And the thought of his coming ought to have the effect of leading all such to be satisfied with nothing short of faith in Christ, salvation in Christ, happiness in Christ, life in Christ. The most miserable of all conditions is to remain always almost a Christian. When God has made a man feel his sinfulness, how infinitely important that he should not delay casting that sinfulness upon Christ, and getting pardon through his blood, and acceptance through his merits, that, clothed in Christ's righteousness, he may be ready for the marriage supper of the Lamb.

"Behold, the Bridegroom cometh." There is good

ews for the tempted Christian ! It tells him of a limit
to his present difficulties. When Christ comes, though
he come at midnight, he will bring light with him. He
will come to deliver his people out of temptation. He
will come to tread Satan under their feet. And the
hought of his coming is one fitted to fill his heart with
gladness, because then there will be an end of all his
onflicts. Then he will enter into perfect peace, for his
varfare will be accomplished.

“Behold, the Bridegroom cometh.” There is com-
fort for the sorrowful ! He comes at midnight, but it
is to change midnight into morning. God’s children
have grief now, but then all their griefs will be swal-
lowed up in abundant joy ; for then it is that Christ will
take his own to himself ; then it is that he will bring
his own with him. And that marriage-day of the
Church will be one of all joy, and no sorrow. The
angels will tune their harps more joyfully. “I heard,”
says John, “as it were the voice of a great multitude,
and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of
mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia ! for the Lord God
omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and
give honour to him, for the marriage of the Lamb is
come, and his bride hath made herself ready.” Oh,
with what hope should each sorrowful believer look for-
ward to the end of trial and the beginning of joy un-
utterable, when the midnight cry is heard, “Behold,
the Bridegroom cometh.”

“Behold, the Bridegroom cometh.” Hear it, you
who are just entering on your Christian life ! Have you
really by faith become his ? Has he made the tears of
sorrow for sin to run down, and wiped those tears away,
or changed them *into tears of joy* ? How different the

feeling now with which you can hear the message, and will hear the midnight cry, from what it would have been before. Now that coming is a thought of gladness. Be very watchful. You know not yet the struggles you will have to maintain with sin and Satan. But keep your eye fixed on this bright prospect. It tends greatly to strengthen the Christian in his course to be bearing it constantly in mind. And if it be so that at this time Christ is especially calling his own, preparing a people in anticipation of the advent, drawing out his election of grace, and completing the body of his Church before her midnight tribulation and his own glorious appearing, how deeply thankful should you be that he has made you partakers of this blessing—how careful to watch, and keep your garments, that you may bring no reproach upon Him who has called you by his grace—how constant in prayer that you, with those who were in Christ before you, may escape those things which are coming on the earth, and stand before the Son of Man.

The first part of the midnight cry, “Behold, the Bridegroom cometh,” has, in a certain sense, been uttered all along. From the time that Jesus ascended into heaven to the present day, his coming has been, or ought to have been, the expectation of the Church.

But the second part of it, “Go ye out to meet him,” has not ever been heard yet. That will not be heard till it is too late for the foolish virgins to buy oil. It seems, as has been said, to foretell, at the darkest period of the Church’s history, while passing through her last tribulation, in the midst of the final persecution, a deep conviction, produced, it may be, by that mission of the angels with the great sound of a trumpet, predicted by

our Lord as the immediate precursor of his own coming, but, in some way or other, a deep conviction in the minds alike of the wise and foolish, of the saved and unsaved, who call themselves Christian, that Christ is near. It does not seem that when this cry is made, this conviction produced, he will immediately appear. Those already saved will have to trim their lamps, and anticipate the moment of translation to meet the Lord in the air, and those unsaved will find salvation for ever fled from their grasp. We have seen in these days how, without any voice from heaven, God is able to move vast masses with the conviction of sin. He does it now to lead men to repentance. He now enables men as readily to welcome the message of redeeming love. But imagine that conviction without that conversion—the sudden universal opening of men's eyes to the truth of their ruined state, and no way of escape open. Such seems to be the condition of the foolish virgins, the Christians without Christ, the lamp-bearers without oil, when the cry is made, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him."

It is a fearful thing to trifle with the message of mercy, and wait for this message not of invitation, but of separation. I do not believe that this wonderful willingness of God to use all means to draw sinners to himself, and to gather them so rapidly, if neglected, will leave men as it found them. We cannot say now that God is gracious in America, in Ireland, in Scotland, but not in England. And when we call to mind how he acts in this matter, drawing souls by such simple means—by the mention in prayer of the unconverted one who might be present—by a hymn—by a word spoken by a *Christian friend*—how can we doubt that it

is because his heart is yearning over the lost ones, and that before he closes for ever the gate of mercy, he opens it as wide as possible, that some may enter in. If any reader of this book is standing without, let him remember that now, at this time, God's Spirit is arresting careless sinners, and making restless souls happy. He is anointing them with the oil of gladness, and preparing them for the coming of the Lord. And shall it be, can it be, that you will remain deaf to his invitation? He is ready—oh! how ready—to receive you. Will you not come to him? Will you not go and take your empty vessel that he may fill it? "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, that he may have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

And if at this moment you are feeling conscious of the danger you are in, and longing to escape from it, be persuaded not to allow that consciousness to pass away without bringing you to Christ. Nothing is so much to be dreaded, when God is working in hearts, as being satisfied with knowing your need without having that need supplied. There is no hindrance now in the way of any man who is willing to accept Christ's salvation. But Satan is constantly engaged in making difficulties. He persuades one that he is too busy just now to attend to that which he is beginning to feel supremely important. He presents to another metaphysical objections, which are very much of the same nature with those which made one philosopher pronounce motion an impossibility, though he walked every day of his life, and *leads the poor conscience-stricken one to sit down and*

consider how he can go to Christ, instead of cutting the knot by going to him. He hides from another the love and the grace and the atoning work of Jesus, and tempts him to think of him as only man, while feeling in his inmost soul that he wants for his Redeemer one who is also God. What will he not do to prevent an inquirer from becoming a believer? He knows that time is pressing. He is not blind to what God is doing. He is sure that ere long the day of grace will have passed, and that if he can but persuade any to remain unsaved till the cry is heard, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh, go ye forth to meet him," it will be too late then. Will you not disappoint him? Dear reader, now you can buy without money and without price. If you could but see the heart of Jesus, you would see it all full of love. He is melting with compassion for those who are so foolish as to remain just on the borders of salvation. Hold up your vessel to be filled. Take it to him, empty as it is, and he will make it run over. He will give you salvation. He will give you grace. He will give you glory. And enable you, with burning lamp, to go forth at the midnight cry to meet the Bridegroom.

CHAPTER IV.

INDIVIDUALITY OF GRACE.

MEN are not saved in masses, but by units. This is always true. No alteration in this respect will ever take place, certainly not before the second advent. And it is exactly the manifestation of the individuality of grace at Christ's coming which we have now to consider. Some seem to expect to be saved by union with Christians, instead of by union with Christ; and the purpose of that portion of the Parable of the Ten Virgins which comes next before us, is to teach us that each must have grace for himself.

The ten virgins all awoke together at the midnight cry, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh." They were not, as we have seen, persons who laid no claim to acquaintanceship with the Bridegroom. They were waiting with the avowed intention of showing him honour, and the avowed hope of entering in with him into the marriage feast; and accordingly the midnight cry, unheard by others, awoke them all at once. There seemed, at first sight, to be no difference among them. They all awake, and make ready for what they now know to be so near.

All the virgins begin to trim their lamps, and it is in so doing the difference manifests itself. Before the lamps were not needed. It did not matter much whether there was oil in them or not; or, rather, it did not seem

matter because they were asleep. But now the time is come for trimming them, in order to use them; and ten proceeded to do so. It is not clear to me whether lamps were burning before or not. It may be said, the one hand, that the foolish virgins complain that ir lamps were "going out"—such is the marginal ding—and that therefore they must have been lighted orehand; and it may be said, on the other hand, t this expression would equally apply if the foolish gins lighted the wicks while there was no oil in the ips, and that the distinction between the two is not t the one took much and the other took little, but t one took some and the other took none. And then s natural to ask, whether these oil-vessels were dis-
ct from the reservoir of oil contained in the lamp self. It is quite evident that, if we are to interpret ery particular incident in the parable, we must know these points. We cannot know them certainly. ry little is known about Jewish lamps, and if we ew about them ever so certainly, we should not be jus-
ed in resting any truth on such a foundation. But it matter of interest, and as it is not, at all events, out harmony with what we know on other grounds to be truth of God, I will state my opinion on this matter. I do not think the lamps were lamps at all in sense of the word, but torches, able to burn in con-
uence of the inflammable materials of which they re made. It is not uncommon in some parts of the st for torch-bearers to carry with them vessels of oil, constant pouring out of which on the torch gives it its brightness. But for the oil the torch would first ew dim, and then go out. The wise virgins and the lish virgins had alike torches, but the one had also

vessels full of oil, the other not. Both seemed to burn alike till the time came for proving the worth of them. Then it was found what made the real difference.

The foolish said unto the wise, "Give us of your oil, for our lamps are going out." The reason they went out was this, that they burned by their own power; they consumed themselves, and there was nothing from without to keep them burning. The want of this had not been felt by the foolish virgins before. They thought the light was everything, and the support of the light nothing; but now they were conscious of their mistake. They tried to make their torches shine, and found them, in spite of all their efforts, going out, while those of their sisters were blazing brightly. Oh, for some oil! Under these circumstances they ask the wise virgins to share with them that which proved to be so invaluable—"Give us of your oil, for our lamps are going out."

The answer is a distinct refusal. "Not so, lest there be not enough for us and you; but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves." It is clear that this incident is introduced for the sake of the interpretation, not for its own sake. In itself there seems something almost harsh and selfish in the refusal. It seems improbable that each should have brought so exactly the right quantity as to have none to spare; and one is inclined to feel that they would have done better to have risked having rather too little for the sake of their young friends. But all this shows us more distinctly that the part of the parable we are considering is an essential part of it. It would not have been introduced for its own sake, but bears with it some deeply important lesson. The wise virgins had enough for them-

selves, but none to spare. It was an individual possession, and could not be shared with others. And yet it was not so because there was any want of oil; there was plenty to be obtained. If they would go and get it at the proper place, they would find no lack. But the wise virgins were not the dispensers of it. They had themselves received it, and they had received only enough. There was enough for each of them, but they could part with none—"Not so, lest there be not enough for us and you." The foolish virgins might have obtained the oil before, as the wise virgins did. Their not doing so was the reason of their present difficulty; but nothing could make up now for their neglect then. The oil was an individual possession. It must be obtained at the right time or it could not be obtained at all; and if that time was lost, no one could remedy the evil. If the oil was not obtained in the proper quarter, it could be obtained nowhere else, and up to the last moment, even till it was too late, no wiser advice could be given than this, "Go ye to them that sell, and buy for yourselves."

The Individuality of Grace is our subject. It is quite true that God has bound his people together in one communion and fellowship, in the mystical body of his Son, which is the blessed company of all faithful people; and it is also true, that as a means of carrying on the work of grace in the conversion of souls and the building up believers, he has joined those who are not believers with those who are believers, in outward churches, that they may listen to the preaching of the Word and be accessible to Christian influences. It is quite true that the wise and foolish virgins are mixed together, and *cannot always be distinguished from one*

another ; but it is true, also, that this will do no good to any one unless it leads him to a personal faith in Christ, and a personal acceptance of salvation. Grace must be individual.

There is no salvation in the mass. It is one of the peculiarities of the present dispensation that God deals with men apart. In a certain sense this always has been, and always must be, the case ; but it is more distinctly so now than it has been or will be. "God," said Simeon, "hath visited the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name ;" and this people are described in Revelation as "gathered out of every nation, and people, and kindred, and tongue." There are no converted nations, or kindreds, or tongues ; nor have we the least reason for thinking that there ever will be till the dispensation closes. It is to individuals in these nations and kindreds God gives grace. Each of them has a separate history ; and even when he is pleased, as at present, to move masses of people with deep conviction, it is not in the mass, but separately, one by one, that souls are drawn to trust in the Saviour.

When men are asleep in unconcern or mere formality, they expect to be saved by outward church membership ; it seems to them that they are safe because they attend the house of God as others do, sit in the same seat with others, are no worse than others, and belong to a church which holds fast the truth.

When men are awake, convinced of sin, they expect sometimes to be saved by the sympathy of Christian friends : they think to be blessed by the blessing which *has descended* on others ; they are more ready to say

others, "Give us of your oil," than to seek it for themselves.

But it must be altogether an individual transaction between God and the soul. Neither the outward association, on which the unawakened sinner rests, nor on the inward sympathy, on which the awakened sinner is sometimes inclined to rest, will stand in its place. Man is saved alone. He must himself individually have pardon, and acceptance, and salvation, and life, and the oil of grace in his heart.

This is truth just fitted for these times; it is truth which in some way or other God will impress upon the minds of men.

Children in Godfearing families need to learn this lesson. It is sometimes the case that a son or a daughter of Christian parents is contented with their religion, and expects to be saved by their grace; the child has grown up into youth, in the constant habit of sharing all his father's earthly blessings, and he transfers his, almost insensibly, to spiritual things, and counts himself safe because his father is. He is reckoning on his father's oil. Many a child in a Christian family do deceive themselves. My dear young friend, be sure of this, that however it may seem to you, your parents' godliness will do you no good unless it leads you to seek the same grace; it will not avail you in the day of Christ's appearing to say, "My father and my mother feared the Lord," unless you did so yourself. You have found them ready to share with you every blessing, but that they will not be able to share with you. Grace is an individual blessing, and they have no more than they need—there is not enough for you and them. In this matter you must have an indivi-

dual possession. You must yourself personally, by grace, be a partaker; no family godliness will avail you anything without it. Parents, and brothers and sisters, and children too may have the oil, but in this matter they cannot help you, and if you have it not your lamp must go out.

Members of Bible-classes must remember the individuality of grace. Some things we do receive in bodies. We can be instructed together; we can be made sorrowful together, or glad together, by mutual sympathy; but we cannot be saved together. It is quite possible for one to remain unsaved in a class in which all the rest are saved, or for one to be saved in a class, all the rest of which are unsaved. It is most important not to mistake association with Christians for Christianity. Many have lately been made to feel the difference. They have awakened in time to the conviction that they must have oil themselves; but what if they had gone on and found their hope a false one at last? If any one reads this page whose hope, instead of resting upon Christ, rests upon this, that in company with others they hear about Christ, it is to you the subject of this chapter applies. You may attend the same class, the same church, the same prayer-meeting, with those who have oil, and have none yourself—their oil will not suffice for you; they may be saved, and you lost. Be sure you are not satisfied with the thought, that your friends have oil, without having it yourself, for if you wait till the midnight cry, and then ask them to share it with you, much as they love you, they cannot give it you—“Not so, lest there be not enough for us and you.”

There is no salvation in the mass. No one will be

lost in the crowd, or creep into heaven, among others, unperceived. Each virgin must have her own lamp, and her own oil-vessel, and be herself ready for the Bridegroom's coming. We are saved as individuals. And oh the unspeakable importance of remembering that, and now, while yet there is time, getting oil each one for himself.

The test of individual grace is in trimming the lamps. "Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps." It was this act of trimming the lamp, or, as it is in the original, beautifying it, which brought the fatal want to sight. When the Bridegroom was coming, the foolish virgins, as well as the wise, wanted their torches to shine, and they would not. Had they tried the experiment before, it would have been with the same result, only then it might have been remedied —now it was found out when it was too late to remedy it.

The lamp is trimmed when the Christian is exercising firm and undoubting faith in the Lord Jesus. Many believers' lamps are untrimmed. They neglect to pour oil on the flame. The result is unbelief, the want of confidence, God-dishonouring doubts, a restlessness like that of others. But then their lamp is capable, if trimmed, of shining. They have the oil, though they do not use it, and if thoroughly awake, their torches would soon blaze. Those who are not believers have untrimmed lamps, and no oil to trim them. Not only there is no firm trust, no assured dependence on the Saviour, but there never has been. If they awake and try to trim their lamps, they find them hopelessly dark—they cannot return from whence they have never fallen, or retrace steps which

they have have never trod. Trimming the lamp tests it.

The lamp is trimmed when the believer walks consistently. Many believers have, in this sense, untrimmed lamps. In one way or another, the man has declined in the Christian life—he has lost his first love, or been attracted by some worldly trifle, or been led into some error, or been slothful in prayer, or neglected the study of the word, or ceased to enjoy communion with God. Then he awakes and find his torch half-extinguished. But he has the oil still, and when he pours it on the wick, the flame begins to revive ; the bright glow of love and zeal, and the warm gush of heartfelt prayer, and conscious communion with the Father and the Son is felt again ; he trims his lamp and it shines. Not so the unconverted one, he, too, feels the necessity of trimming his lamp ; he knows that he ought to do many things which he does not do ; he tries to act as if he were a Christian ; he will pray, and read, and abstain from some things which are unlawful, and perhaps from other things which are lawful—but with all his efforts, and all his resolutions, the torch will not burn. It will not burn, because there is no oil.

The lamp is trimmed when the heart is happy, and in this respect, also, many a wise virgin has an untrimmed lamp. She has forgotten Paul's words, “ Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again I say, rejoice.” Some cloud has come over the mind, and the torch smoulders instead of blazing ; but then she has the oil in her vessel. All that is needed is a fresh anointing from the Holy One, and when she wakes from sleep, and pours the oil upon the lamp, the flame bursts forth afresh, and though heaviness has endured for a night,

meth in the morning. The untrimmed lamp looks the same, whether held by the wise virgin or foolish one; but when the foolish virgin trims lamp, she finds no oil. The attempt to be happy failure—there is no oil of gladness to make her so, for she has been pleasing herself with sparks before, will do her no good when she wishes to trim her

Like the troubled sea, she cannot rest. There is morning joy after a night of grief, and when she has to trim her lamp, she will "lie down in sorrow." Trimming the lamp is the test of the profession. are very anxious to find some other test—they want to distinguish between untrimmed lamps. The thing is visible. It is only in the exercise of faith we can never faith—it is only in the exercise of love we can never love. We do not know that we can walk except by talking, or that we can speak except by speaking, or we can see except by seeing, and we do not know we believe except by believing. Nothing removes us from the believer except a fresh exercise of love and nothing removes false hopes from one not a nearer so surely as the attempt to exercise true faith. are in the midst of Christian friends. A fresh visitation of the Spirit is granted, their faces brighten, their hearts glow, and they delight in prayer, and express strongly their assurances of salvation, and over they feel to the name of Jesus. The oil is burning their lamps. You would do the same. Try to trim your lamp, but it only goes out. Surely want the oil. Be wise in time, and since you have nevered this before it is too late, now, while yet the groom tarrieth, go and get it.

extinguished lamps are spoken of—"Our lamps

are gone out." "Going out" it is in the margin. But it matters not here; going out, or gone out, it is much the same. It seems that the lamps may burn without oil till the cry is made, but then they must go out. It is plain, that while they held their lighted torches, and waited with the other virgins for the Bridegroom's coming, there was some distinction between the foolish virgins who had lamps, and those who had no lamps and did not wait. They professed to be friends of the Bridegroom. But when their lamps had gone out, there was no difference at all. It was no better for them than for others; and that which is so instructive, is to see how long a torch will burn which burns of its own self. It may just burn till the Bridegroom is in sight, and then, when most wanted, it must go out.

In the day of Christ's appearing how many lamps will go out. When there is an awakening as now, lamps which seemed to burn are extinguished that they may really burn. In the same way it will be found, when Christ appears, that there will be lamps extinguished, but extinguished then for ever.

The man whose hope has rested on an outward form of godliness will find his lamp extinguished then. It is not the most constant presence at all means of grace which will save a man then. It sometimes now seems to supply the place of a burning lamp. In the man's eyes it shines; he thinks very much of it; and because he is so regular in his attendance at the house of God, and in other religious observances, he thinks himself ready for the Bridegroom's coming. One single ray of light let into his soul would extinguish that supposed light altogether. Much more will it be so *when Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, rises in full-*

orbed glory on this dark world. Oh ! how empty then will seem the form of godliness without the power thereof. It seems so now when a man is awake, how much more then.

And he will find his lamp extinguished who has not lit it with fire from heaven. The true way of lighting it is by faith in Jesus. The lamp must be lighted in the exercise of faith on what Christ has done. Those who, as sinners, have learned to trust in the Saviour have lamps which will not go out. But when this is not the case, when in any other way a man has become devout, and thinks himself saved without the exercise of real personal dependence on Christ, that lamp is sure to prove a failure—it will not shine when the Bridegroom cometh.

He who is not anointed by the Holy Ghost will find his lamp going out when he most needs it. He may have known many things and felt many things. But those only have lamps which will burn brightly then, who are now led by the Spirit and taught by the Spirit, and in whose hearts the Spirit is erecting Christ's throne.

Extinguished lamps ! it is a fearful thought. Some whom we have believed to be burning brightly may then prove to have no oil ; and as we now find that God does try his work, and makes many who reckoned all right to find that all is wrong, compels them to see that their lamps are going out, in order that they may get them really lighted and really fed, in that day the same discovery will be made to those who have not discovered it before, and they will learn, when they cannot alter it, what it is to have no oil in their vessels, and to see their lamp expire in the blackness of darkness for ever.

But the advice too late given by the wise virgins, and too late taken by the foolish virgins, is advice which it is not now too late to give and take—"Go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves."

God invites those who are without grace to seek for it. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." That is God's way of selling, to give freely. In no other way could we ever obtain what we want. If we had to bring any price, if we had to pay anything when we buy, it would be hopeless. But Christ has himself purchased the blessing for us; and when we go to him, he gives it to us for nothing. Here is encouragement to seek for what we so much need. Will you leave it till the midnight cry is made? Now is the time for seeking oil; now he is ready to supply all your need; now you have only to ask and you shall receive. The heavenly Father is waiting, anxiously waiting, to satisfy every longing desire of your soul. He is ready now at this time to fill your vessel. "Ask and ye shall have, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you." "If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him."

One convinced of his need of grace must not wait till it comes, but go to seek it. We find God acting as a sovereign, and sending a blessing when we have not expected it. And this sometimes leads anxious inquirers to wait instead of going. They wait for the oil to be poured into their vessels, instead of taking *their vessels* to get them filled with oil. But this is a

mistake. "Go ye," go and ask him for that which he is so ready to bestow. Does not conscience bear witness that your lamp is going out now, and that you have no oil? Do you not feel assured that your lamp will not burn when the Bridegroom cometh? Then wait for nothing, but go at once and buy oil of him who sells without money and without price.

Each one for himself must buy. We cannot in this supply each others wants. We may, indeed, pray for each other, and God does wonderfully hear the prayers which are so made, but there must, in each case, be a personal receiving of grace for one's self. Be sure you do not rest content without it. Have you some dear father or mother, or brother or sister, who has oil in the lamp while you are without it? And can you bear the thought of finding that when they trim their lamps to meet the Bridegroom yours will be extinguished? Some have lately filled their vessels, and is yours still empty? Will you wait till the midnight cry to go on a fruitless errand to get oil? Go now; go while there is yet time; go while too many are asleep; go while the Bridegroom tarrieth; go and get the oil, and then when he does come he will find you ready.

And, lastly, how earnestly should all who have oil say to those who have none, "Go ye to those that sell, and buy for yourselves." You know, in some little degree, the importance of this matter. Now, your advice may be useful, whereas when the Bridegroom is come, it will be useless. It is sad indeed to have to say, "Not so, lest there be not enough for us and you," when it is too late to get more. But now there is enough and to spare. Oh, leave not the entreaty till then, when it sounds almost a mockery. But now tell all whom

you can influence to go and get oil. Tell them that the Bridegroom is coming, and that if they have no oil they must be shut out. Tell them that in this matter you cannot help them; that salvation, and pardon, and grace must be personally theirs. Tell them they must have the blessing for themselves or perish, and beseech them to seek what those who seek shall find, that when the Bridegroom comes they may be found ready, and enter into the marriage supper of the Lamb.

CHAPTER V.

THE MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB.

WHAT is the hope of the Church? The Church is an affianced bride waiting for the marriage day. She is represented in the Apocalypse as having put on her marriage attire, and made herself ready for the Bridegroom's coming. And when St. John saw in vision the bride, the Lamb's wife, and heard the songs of the saved, he felt constrained to say, "Blessed are they that are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb."

I do not think that in the book of Revelation, the bride, and those who are called to the marriage supper, constitute two distinct classes of persons; but that both are emblems of the Church under different aspects; and in the same way, in this Parable of the Ten Virgins, the wise virgins are the Church, and the bride is not mentioned, as if mentioned she would have been an emblem of the Church also.

The marriage supper of the Lamb is looked on in our text with reference to the invited guests. It is the final consummation of this present state of things, the entrance of the Church on her glory, and the commencement of her eternal blessedness. What we have to do is to try and take a glimpse of these glorious things, and just, for a little moment, to look within the veil and see what is awaiting us at the coming of our Lord.

The part of the parable before us is very simple, and unencumbered with difficulties. We have seen that its prophetical interpretation does require us to suppose that, during the Church's midnight, in the midst of that tribulation which appears to be rapidly approaching, there will be in some way deeply impressed upon the minds of all who profess to be Christians, whether really so or not, the nearness of Christ's advent; but that it will be then, which it is not now, too late to make ready for it. There will be, it would seem, something like that general conviction which, in times of revival, so strangely spreads among the masses, only probably more intense, produced by the cry, however uttered, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh!" but unaccompanied by conversion, or the possibility of it. In our parable the foolish virgins are represented as going to buy during this interval. This is, I think, the meaning of our Lord's words, "Many, I say unto you, shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able." Now, all who seek find; none who ask for the oil of grace are denied it; but the hour of giving will terminate before the hour of asking; a time will arrive when it will be too late to begin. The foolish virgins did begin, but they began too late; they went to buy, but they did not find it possible to obtain the oil in time. While they went to buy the Bridegroom came, and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage. As soon as the procession approached, each with her burning lamp joined it, and accompanied it home. They went in with the Bridegroom, and, as the last entered, the door was shut; all who were to enter had entered, and immediately the door was shut.

And so it will be at Christ's appearing in the clouds

of heaven; his own people, those made wise by the Holy Spirit who are ready for his coming, will be caught up to meet him. We know, from St. Paul's Epistle to the Thessalonians, that just at the same time, or rather immediately before, the saints who have fallen asleep in Jesus will rise from their graves—"For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent those that are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord." This gathering of the saints, both the raised and the changed, to meet the Lord in the air, is their entrance into the marriage supper. With their lamps burning, each of them enters the pearly gates of the New Jerusalem; not one of them is absent; and when they have entered in, and the last of all the train has crossed the threshold of glory, then those gates which opened to receive the King of glory close again. No more admittance there, and no more danger of expulsion thence; for to keep those who are there in safety, and keep all others out, the everlasting doors will roll back on their hinges, and be for ever shut.

Let us look in for a moment, while they remain open, and see some of the glories of the place.

There is the completion of a long expectation; it is to the marriage supper of the Lamb the Church has ever been looking forward; but the hope has been long deferred, and while it has been deferred there has been

a weary time of waiting. How glad the five wise virgins must have felt in the complete accomplishment of their wishes. And at the marriage supper of the Lamb those who have been waiting long for the second advent, as Simeon did for the first, will find all their hopes fulfilled; and when they begin to experience the blessings of their home, will say, like the Queen of Sheba, "Behold, the half was not told me."

There is the enjoyment of all those things which the Christian most longs for, the food which is prepared for Christ's people: "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God." But what is the bread believers will then eat?

The words of God will be their food: "Thy words were found," Jeremiah says, "and I did eat them, and they were unto me the rejoicing of my heart." "The word of our God shall stand for ever." In what particular form we shall have God's word to feed upon in glory we cannot say; but in some form or other we shall still find that man in glory, as well as man on earth, must live on every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. How far promises may be necessary or applicable there we do not know; but there must be declarations of God's will and manifestations of God's glory. We know nothing about the manner; we cannot tell how we shall still have the word of God; but there cannot be a doubt of the fact. Still this will be food for the soul; still in some way the risen and glorified saints will live upon God's word, and will be able to say, in a higher sense than Jeremiah, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them, and they were unto me the rejoicing of my heart."

They shall feed on doing God's will. Jesus himself

said as man, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." Then this must be ever the food of man when transformed into Christ's image. It is not simply conformity to God's will, but the actually doing it in active engagement. The Christian is sometimes debarred from this great blessedness now. It is the will of God, for infinitely wise reasons, that some believers should suffer in patience instead of labouring in action; but when it is so it is not to be always so. There is a real blessedness in work for God, and an enjoyment which God means all his children to have; and, if never before, at the marriage supper of the Lamb they shall have it. We do not know how we shall serve the Lord; what will be the various employments in which the saints will be occupied. One we do know, that of showing to others the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness towards us. It is one remarkable feature in those converted to God during a revival, the intense delight they take in showing forth God's praises; and this we know to be one of the joys of that time of gladness. It will then, undoubtedly, whatever else may be their employment, be one part of it to tell others of the loving-kindness of the Lord. Some of God's children, who seem shut out by providential circumstances from active work for him, may look forward to this hereafter. It shall one day be their meat and their drink, when they sit down at the marriage supper of the Lamb. Oh, with what joy shall we do this, when we can do it without distraction and without sin. Now sin mingles with all our services, and spoils them; but then we shall serve him with no distraction *at all*. There will be nothing

then to hinder us from doing his will; no interruptions either from within or without; for then, with an emphasis never known before, his servants shall serve him.

Righteousness will be our food at the marriage supper of the Lamb. "They that hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be satisfied;" but they never are satisfied now. The more a man knows of the blessedness of conformity to the mind of God in holiness, the more does he desire it. It is not a longing natural to the human heart, but is implanted there by God himself.

A very happy thing it is to be made to hunger and thirst after righteousness. That hunger and thirst of the soul is a symptom of returning health; it shows that there is a taste for things divine implanted which man could not have stirred up, and which must be the gift of God the Holy Ghost. At the marriage supper of the Lamb this hunger and thirst will be satisfied. The glorified saints will be filled with holiness; each in his degree will be holy as God is holy, and pure as he is pure. Many a believer now is longing for this, and troubled indeed to find that, in spite of all his desires, there is so much sin within him. The good which he would he does not, and the evil which he would not that he does; but on that day, when admitted within those gates, this shall be so no more. All the evil will have been left behind; no more sin will trouble him; no conflicts any longer with indwelling corruption; but he will find every thought, and wish, and desire, and imagination brought into complete obedience to Christ. It is this being satisfied *with righteousness*, without which no other blessing

would be valuable; and, oh! how wonderful the change when one who has been long struggling with the burden of indwelling sin and deep corruption, is enabled to feel that it is gone for ever, because he is there where no sinful thoughts and no tempting devil can ever enter. That is, indeed, angels' food when man is satisfied with righteousness.

They feed on Christ himself; this is the meaning of the tree of life in Revelation. It is said, "In the midst of the street thereof, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bear twelve manner of fruit, and yielded her fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." With the leaves we have nothing to do in this connection; but the fruit of the tree evidently represents Christ himself the food of his saved and glorified people. The fruit of the tree of life will form the support of saints in heaven; here is all that a soul can possibly need; here is that which is amply sufficient to fill all its desires, and satisfy all its wants.

How plenteous a table will that be which will be spread for the guests at that marriage supper. Then all those deep longings of the soul, which nothing here will satisfy, will receive their full, complete, and perfect accomplishment. "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat; for the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters."

Another of the glories of the marriage supper of the Lamb is the companionship we shall meet with.

This is frequently alluded to. Jesus said, "They

shall come from the east and from the west, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of God;" and "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth when ye shall see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, and all the prophets, sit down in the kingdom of God, and ye yourselves cast out." I do not understand how in the face of these texts any can doubt the recognition of the saints. It seems to me as plainly revealed as the resurrection of the body, and, in fact, to give to that article of our creed one great part of its importance.

We have already, by faith, fellowship and citizenship with saints above as well as saints below. "We are come," says Paul, "unto Mount Zion, and to the city of the living God—the heavenly Jerusalem—and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect." But now it is only by faith we can call that blessed society ours. We have not yet come to it in person; that is the hope we look forward to at the marriage supper. We hope then to enter among all those who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

What a gathering that will be! Around that table we shall meet all whom we have most loved to see below. Those who with us have met around the table of the Lord, we shall meet with there in a state in which there shall be no more parting. Our Christian friends whom we have loved to talk with here shall be there to take up the broken threads of all that was godly in our conversation. We shall see those whom we have never

seen, but who are dear to us for the sake of their Lord and ours. What wonderful pleasure will there be in conversing with Enoch, and Noah, and Moses, with Peter, and Paul, and John ; with the three Maries, and with all who like them have fought and overcome. What delight in meeting with those whose histories we have loved to read, or whose biographies have made our hearts burn—with Augustine without his mistakes, and Luther without his violence, and Cranmer without his timidity—and all the saints of every age, with everything holy preserved, and everything sinful removed—and to find one's self at home with men of whom the world was not worthy.

But there is a companionship which is better even than this. Better, infinitely better, than the companionship of all Christ's people is that of Christ himself. He is indeed the central point of all attraction at that marriage feast. How wonderful to be with Jesus.

This is the crowning glory of that day. He is coming whose presence makes the heart of all his people happy, and when they enter with him into that marriage feast, there will then be fullness of joy, and pleasures for evermore. And it may be indeed felt to be a very distinct and distinguishing part of a man's Christianity whether this companionship is that which he would rejoice in ; because there are multitudes to whom nothing would be less pleasant than to be with Jesus.

Not so his people. This is the best glory of the place ; and it is not the gates of pearl and the streets of gold, it is not the songs of angels and archangels, and all the company of heaven—it is not even the dear and

cherished society of those we love in the Lord—precious as all those things are—which make the chief attraction ; but it is this—and when faith is lively and love is in exercise, we feel it to be this—it is this, that there we shall see the King in his beauty.

“ I shall see Him whom absent I loved,
Whom, not having seen, I adored.”

But who are they who will enter within those open gates ? “ They that were ready went in with him to the marriage.” We have seen what this means in the parable. Those that were ready were the five wise virgins who had oil with their torches, and were able, with burning lights, to accompany the bridal procession. But yet the expression is not a mere repetition of the fact that they had lamps and oil-vessels. It is true that all who had lamps and oil in their vessels with their lamps were ready, but their being ready does not refer to their previous preparation, but to their actual readiness, to their getting ready by trimming their lamps. All who had oil did get ready ; those who had not oil could not get ready ; and those who were ready went into the marriage. There is a remarkable passage in the Apocalypse which bears, I think, greatly upon this. We there read :—“ The marriage of the Lamb is come, and his bride hath made herself ready.” The bride and the five wise virgins are both emblems of the Church under different aspects. And it seems that immediately before the coming of the Lord the Church will be made ready for it.

Just at present, God is gathering in very many

souls in very many places, and from every quarter souls are awakening to a new life. I do not think that will last long—I am sure it will not last always. I am persuaded that those dear brethren who are speaking about the conversion of the world are under a mistake, and will find it out before long. But God is saving many, many souls. Now it does appear to me that it is not unlikely that, after a while, this work of conversion will close, and that then the five wise virgins will pour oil on their lamps, and the five foolish virgins indeed, to their dismay, that they have none to pour, and that the time has passed for obtaining any. Of one thing I am quite sure, that whether this period of making ready, which all the wise virgins will use, and which none of the foolish virgins can use, immediately follows this present wide outpouring of grace or not, it is a very fearful thing to pass it by. At all events, a time is coming when they that are ready will go in with the Bridegroom unto the marriage.

“They that were ready.” Though the words refer directly to that last trimming of the lamps before the Bridegroom’s coming, yet they do imply necessarily a previous readiness to make ready—the possession of the oil. None will make ready then who are not ready now. Now is the time for becoming really ready. In what does this readiness consist?

Those are ready for Christ’s coming, ready to trim their lamps, who are really his. There is a wide distinction here. The separation between those who are Christ’s and those who are not Christ’s is a very plain one. It is not so difficult to discover as some seem to think. It might indeed have been difficult for a stranger to decide *between* the wise and foolish vir-

gins, but it only needed for them to be awake to see it themselves. There was no mistaking the thing then. Most men if honest with themselves will find that they have no doubt about this matter. Some have no doubt that they are saved, and others have no doubt that they are unsaved. Are you unsaved? Then you cannot even make ready for the Bridegroom's coming. Whenever the midnight cry is heard, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh," you will find it impossible to make ready. You need to be saved first. I long to persuade you not to rest satisfied without being ready, without being saved, without being in such a condition that, if the Lord should come, you would be able instantly to trim your lamp. Oh, how bitterly must the foolish virgins have bewailed having put off doing that which could not be done always. And so will you, with a never-ending but useless sorrow, if you wait to be saved till it is too late to be saved, and see others going in, and you yourselves shut out. Will you not go to him now? Will you not at this very time, while reading this book, awake to the real necessity of the case; ask him to make you really wise, give you all that is needed, enable you to believe in him, and supply your vessel with the oil of grace? Will you not do it? Will you not do it now?

But the words, "those that were ready," refer not only to the readiness to make ready, but to the making ready itself. All who are saved, when Christ comes, will be found not only saved, but in readiness for his coming—"his bride hath made herself ready."

Even now, whenever God works in the conversion

of souls, he does also quicken the graces of his people. It is one great purpose which he always keeps in view in pouring forth his Spirit; and though the immediate prophetic bearing of our text is not to be accomplished till the Bridegroom comes, yet even now, in a degree, it is God's design to make his people ready for that event. He is not content with bringing in fresh souls, and making new lamps burn, but he does refresh those who are his already, and pour the oil of gladness on their heads.

None of us should rest satisfied without this great blessing; none should be contented without receiving that fresh anointing which he seems so willing to bestow. Sometimes, God does in a degree beforehand what he is going to do in a greater measure afterwards; and though the time has not yet arrived for the midnight cry, he does seem to be already, in some degree, making some of his people ready. I do not think we can sufficiently estimate the importance of receiving blessings just when the Lord is pleased to grant them. I am sure that no one can safely or wisely neglect these blessings now. How often have some of us longed for more grace; how have we desired that our lamp might burn brighter. And is he pouring oil on those of some of our brethren in other lands, or perhaps of some known to us? Then let us give him no rest without ourselves possessing the same. But pray, and wait, and watch, and expect that we ourselves shall be blessed and made ready for the Bridegroom's coming.

And when at last the whole Church is made ready, when, on the cry being made, "Behold, the Bride-

groom cometh," the reality of their grace is shown by their being able at once to trim their lamps, and prepare to meet him; then, how unspeakable the blessedness of standing calm and joyful when all hearts are failing for fear, looking without alarm on Him who sits upon the cloud, and going in with him to the marriage.

It is added, "And the door was shut." We will not consider, in this chapter, the bearing these words have on those without. Our subject leads us to the other side, and we look on the door being shut with reference to those that are within. It is shut to keep them in. "They shall go no more out," is one of the precious promises to the Church in the Apocalypse. Those who enter the marriage will find themselves where they shall never cease to be at home. Shut in from all sorrow, all pain, all curse, all sin. Nothing can come in to cause them anxiety. The enemy of souls cannot find his way through that closed door. Noah was safe in the ark when God shut him in, and so will those be who are admitted within the palace, and sit down at Christ's table in his kingdom. We cannot always here shut out sin and sorrow from our holiest services. But there they cannot enter; and each one of the saved, with nothing to spoil his joy or interrupt his peace, will be shut in for ever from all the power of the enemy.

We must seek for more grace, that we may ever make our torches burn brighter; and, oh, that he would indeed shut the door, and drive away all that can interrupt our communion with him. We would be with Jesus, and in conscious fellowship with all who

love him. May he grant us a full, deep, realizing sense of his presence with us, and at all times enable us to anticipate the hour when we shall be with him in glory, and with all his saints rejoice together at the marriage supper of the Lamb.

CHAPTER VI.

TOO LATE.

Too late—too late—too late, that is the subject we have to think of now. May no reader of this book ever know it in his own experience.

We are told nothing of the proceedings of the foolish virgins during the interval between the midnight cry and the incident before us. They went to buy. In the strict prophetical interpretation of the parable, as we are only told they went to buy, and not that they bought, we are not required to explain the buying. The foolish virgins may have found the shops closed, and in despair of obtaining oil have rushed back to the marriage without it. This is, perhaps, most likely. One thing is certain, that persons may seek grace too late, but cannot obtain it too late; all who have the oil will have it in time to enter into the marriage.

But there is such a thing as seeking spiritual blessings in a wrong way; and though I doubt whether this is in strictness to be drawn from the parable, we will for a moment glance at it. How the wise virgins got their oil we are not told. Nor are we told whether the advice they gave to the foolish virgins would have been good advice if it had not been too late. Perhaps

no emphasis is to be laid on the fact that they went to buy. It may be that the word is used simply to express the natural way of getting oil. It is so used elsewhere. As in Isaiah, where the Lord says, "Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." Or in Revelations, where Jesus uses these words, "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich." If the result had been satisfactory we need not have gone further, but considering that they did not succeed, we may perhaps ask whether buying oil was the right way of obtaining it.

There are many who do, in fact, go to buy oil. They think that salvation is to be obtained at the cost of something of their own. They will buy it with their efforts, their prayers, their self-denial, their repentance. And when made really desirous of being converted they put off coming to Christ and accepting salvation and pardon, and the gift of his Spirit, until they can bring something with them in order to deserve it.

This is the reason why many who are convinced of their sins remain long without being saved. They go to buy instead of coming to take. This is always the wrong course. So long as it is persisted in no good can possibly come. Nothing we can bring does in the least degree deserve any favour from God. We cannot purchase anything from him. You never will be able to do it any more than you are now. Should you live to the age of Methuselah you would never find a better moment than the present. You have nothing to pay, and so long as you seek to pay you will obtain no blessing. If the anxious sinner would but go to Christ at once as having nothing, he would at once receive from him everything. *But if he will wait till he thinks*

himself able to purchase, he is sure to be too late. Oh that I could persuade each unsaved one among my readers to accept salvation freely, and not to think to give anything for it. You must indeed come just as you are, and take from him freely what he does so freely give.

When the Bridegroom comes he will find many buying grace, many seeking for salvation in ways not appointed or approved by him. Such will not be better off than others. It is no advantage to be trying to buy what must, if possessed at all, be received freely. And it would be a sad thing when the Bridegroom cometh to be found, like the foolish virgins, gone to buy.

What is it which keeps you at this time from salvation? What are you looking for in order to come to Christ? That is the price which you want to offer for the oil. Be persuaded to relinquish that vain attempt, and at once, now that he is so willing to be gracious, to accept pardon and the gift of the Spirit which he bestows on those who have received him. Then it will never be true of you, "While they went to buy, the Bridegroom came, and the door was shut."

"The door was shut." We considered this in the last chapter, with reference to those within, now we have to consider it with reference to those without. The door which shut the wise virgins in shut the foolish virgins out. We cannot conceal the fact that a door closed by God himself will separate eternally between one and another; and these foolish virgins are not distinguished as being peculiarly careless and peculiarly wicked. They are not any of them avowed enemies of the Bridegroom. The distinction seems a small one, and yet it is a decisive one.

And the door which shuts the one in shuts the other out.

At the present time the door is open. Perhaps it may be said to be more open than usual. It seems as though Christ were at this time himself holding the door wide open, and inviting sinners to enter in. But when he comes that open door will be closed. For foolish virgins then there will remain no way of escape. There are some to whom this thought should be a very alarming one. Are there not some who are always lingering outside the open door? It seems to you so open that you think you may enter in any day. On this account you linger on the threshold, and do not enter in at all. But when the Bridegroom cometh it will be too late to enter in; for then the door will be shut. And some remain outside convinced of their sinfulness, yet refusing to trust in Jesus. Such are not saved. They know themselves not to be saved; and yet it is sometimes found that a man will go on for years becoming at times very anxious in mind, offering up many a prayer, and yet refusing to take the one only direct course, of believing simply on the Lord Jesus. Now the door is open; but what if they should remain in this state until the door is shut?

"Afterwards came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us." It does not seem to me that we are required to give any exact prophetic fulfilment to these words; and yet it must be remembered that if we are right in our general interpretation of the prophecy, it refers to the time when the saints will be raised to meet the Lord in the air, and the rest will be left behind when the hour of grace has ceased, and

it is no longer possible for them to be saved; when these words will have been pronounced, "He that is unjust let him be unjust still, and he which is filthy let him be filthy still, and he that is righteous let him be righteous still, and he that is holy let him be holy still." It is evident that the words "Lord, Lord, open unto us" may receive a perfectly literal accomplishment. It is possible, in such circumstances, to suppose, difficult not to suppose the cry, "Open unto us," made by those who find themselves shut out. Surely there was many a longing desire, when the flood came, to enter into the ark. As it was seen floating in safety over the waters, there must have been a voice heard which Noah could not answer—"Open unto us." And this seems to be the meaning of those words, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able, when once the Master of the house has risen up and has shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without and to cry unto him, Lord, Lord, open unto us." There is no bar now to any seeking soul's entering in. It cannot now be said that many or any seek to enter in and are not able. It is when Christ shall have come, when the Master of the house shall have risen up and shut to the door, that they shall seek to enter in and shall not be able.

What an important element time is in the matter of salvation. The same cry which would issue in life now, will issue only in death then. The words which would open heaven to-day may to-morrow fall uselessly. It ought to make one tremble to see men and women trifling away those hours on which everything depends. *And when as now we find that God is constantly bring-*

ing souls, not slowly but in a very short space of time, into the number of his people, how can we help fearing that those who delay may never find that Saviour who is willing to save them now.

Has it not surprised you to find some whom, without any particular reason, you had supposed to be God's children, telling you that such was not the case, that they had never committed their souls to the Saviour, though perhaps often anxious about salvation? It is not safe to rest upon the good opinion of friends—upon seriousness of feeling—upon attendance on the means of grace—upon a knowledge of the gospel, while outside the door. And if any reader of this book is conscious that this is the case, to you, dear brother or dear sister, I say—I wish to say it with all possible tenderness, but I must say it—that if you neglect the present time, when God is working in hearts, it is too likely that when Jesus has come you will find yourself still outside the door, saying in vain, what you might now say effectually, "Lord, Lord, open unto us."

And quite sure I am that if you do really knock at Mercy's gate, you shall not go away unsaved. Men remain unsaved, not because Christ is unwilling to save them, but because they will not come to him. Oh, if in time you would do what, when it is too late, you will do, what joy would there be in heaven! Shall there not be?

"But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you I know you not."

Jesus has himself declared, "I know my sheep, and am known of mine." He has said, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them and they follow me." And here he says to these foolish virgins, when excluded

from the marriage, "I know you not." It is evidently parallel with what the Master of the house says when he has risen up and shut to the door, "I never knew you." Knowing Christ and being known by Christ are always joined together. Those whom Christ knows are those who know Christ. None who are really acquainted with him as the hope of glory, are in any danger of being rejected by him when he comes at the marriage day of the Lamb; for he cannot possibly say to them, "I never knew you."

It is very important that we should have a firm grasp of this blessed truth.

Those know Christ, and are known by Christ, who have learned to lean upon him as their only and all-sufficient hope. Men may be very religious without doing that. But when the Spirit has been teaching a man something of his own lost and ruined state, and then enabling him to grasp by faith that salvation which is in Christ Jesus, it is impossible to say that Christ does not know him, or that he does not know Christ. He has been carrying on the most important business with Christ, and most certainly the Saviour will never forget it, nor will he forget it either. This is the sort of knowledge which is meant. There is a sense in which Christ knows all men and all things. "The Word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight, but all things are naked and open unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." He penetrates *all hearts*, reads all desires, and cannot by possibility

make any mistake. "All things are naked and open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." "With whom we have to do." It is not all who have anything to do with Christ. Some, too many, have no business transaction with him at all. In this sense he knows nothing of them. They have not been to him for oil. He has not given them gold or fine raiment. There has been no giving on his part, and no receiving on their part. They have been as strangers to him and he to them. Then what can they expect, but that when he shall appear he should say unto them, "I never knew you."

Those know Christ, and are known by him, who have communion with him in prayer. This is the intercourse of friendship. Christ does commune with his people. He did so of old, in the temple, from the mercy-seat. And he does so now in heaven, when we draw near to his throne of grace. What prayers have ascended to him from multitudes of saved sinners. How graciously has he answered poor weak prayers such as ours. Nothing is more wonderful than the real intercourse between heaven and earth which is thus maintained. And when one of his believing people is in the habit of drawing near to him from day to day, and from hour to hour—when in seasons of perplexity and difficulty the natural resource is prayer—when the man talks with his unseen Saviour, as friend with friend, do you not see how impossible it would be for that Saviour to say to that man, "I know you not"?

Are there not many who have no such intercourse with Jesus? They do not pray in this way. Prayer with them is not the familiar interchange of friendship. It

is not the utterance of the heart's inmost longings to One who is felt to be willing to hear them, and grant them. A man may speak many prayers, which if he were speaking them to his fellow-men would give them no insight into his wishes. He may join in the prayers of others; and yet not really be in the presence of Jesus consciously at all. Then he knows not Christ, and Christ knows not him. They are to all intents and purposes on the footing of strangers to each other. And it ought to excite no surprise that Jesus should say to such "I know you not."

Those know Christ, and are known by him, whom he leads by his voice. His voice is the Gospel. And it is the peculiarity of that voice that it is heard only by those whom Christ knows as his sheep. None other listen to it. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." This is a truth of which we must never lose sight. It is one of the most important possible. When a soul is really converted to God, the gospel is felt to have a power which it never had before. It draws, it delights, it makes happy, it transforms. The Spirit is moving in that heart, and the instrument he employs is this voice of Christ. The result is seen in the direction of the soul's motion. It tends upwards instead of downwards—Godward instead of earthward. It is following a golden cord, of which Christ holds one end. It is so linked to him as to follow him whithersoever he goeth. Following Christ does not consist simply in the imitation of Christ. Imitation is a poor thing at all times, and most of all when it is the imitation by the sinful of him who is the sinless. But following Christ is being drawn along *with him*. The soul is united to him by faith. There

is a bond joining the two together.' And as the sheep follows the shepherd, not as imitating the shepherd, but as being attracted by the shepherd's voice—follows the shepherd because he is its shepherd—so do those who are Christ's follow him, placing him before them in each path of duty, and not only treading in his footsteps, but being drawn by his Spirit. Of all who are so he says, "I know them." He says so now. Now that they are living in the midst of temptation and difficulty, often, constantly, sinning, and in various ways grieving him, he says, "I know them."

It is not always that they are known, even by their Christian friends. If some are judged to be Christians who are not so, others are judged not to be Christians who are so. Men's judgment is very fallible. And there are believers who have no Christian intercourse because their brother Christians do not know them. But Christ himself makes no such mistake. He can see the reality of the thing under the ugliest disguise. And there is many a child of God, weak it may be, unornamented it may be, not a polished corner it may be, but a rough piece out of sight, of whom men think little, who is rather frowned upon by Christ's people, to whom Christ by his Spirit is saying, in the stillness of his heart, "I know you."

Of all such how plain it is that he will say the same when he comes again. Men may be warm to-day and cold to-morrow, may to-day give the warm shake of the hand, and to-morrow pass coldly by. Not so Christ. Those to whom he would say to-day, "I know you," he will say it to to all eternity. In this respect, what is now will be ever. Those whom Christ recog-

nizes in time, he will recognize in eternity. If he acknowledges them here, he will acknowledge them in his Father's palace, and whatever else he says, will never say to them "I know you not."

But those who know not his voice, and are not led by him, cannot expect him to hear him owning them as his in that day. He does not know them now, and he will not know them then. Perhaps you have no perception of what Christ's voice is. There is to you no sweetness in it. It awakens no echo in your heart. You do not know it from the voice of the stranger. No bond unites you to him. But, like a sheep on the mountains, you are wandering without a shepherd. He may call you to himself. He may do so now. But if not; if you do not come to him, are not drawn by him, while he tarrieth, be sure of this—he will not, cannot, say of you when he comes, "I know you." It is an inward matter this knowing Christ, and being known by him, but it is an all-important matter. On it hangs the whole question of personal salvation. How vast the importance of being quite sure that I know Christ, and that he will not say to me, when he shuts to the door, "I know you not."

But what if a man should think he knows Christ, and is known by him, and by his words, or his conduct, should be constantly saying, "I know him not?" Peter did so once—he did so twice—he did so thrice, and Peter was thrice forgiven. But what if Peter had all his life long refused to own that he knew the Saviour?

I believe that all who do really know Christ will be constrained by God's loving Spirit to say so. It *has been so always*, and now God is especially making

men and women to speak the truth about this matter, whatever the truth be. But what if one, thinking himself to know Christ, should continue constantly in words or deeds denying him? Then, must it not be that those words will just apply to him, "He that shall deny me before men, him will I deny before my Father which is in heaven?" And what will he say? Will he say, "I once knew this sinner, but he said he did not know me, therefore I now disown him?" No, not so. That is not his way of acting. Those who are his he does enable to confess him. What he will say will be this, "I know you not." "I never knew you."

I feel—how can I but feel—that there is a peculiar willingness on God's part at this time to break up false hopes, and to give true peace. He is surely in these latter days very near to us; surely his own blessed Spirit is in some sense arousing the sleeping, and bidding them look to their lamps. Some are making acquaintance with Christ who have never known him yet. But why not more? The very fact of the awaking of some to a new life, seems to bring forth into more prominence the awful condition of others.

If one and another are taught by God that they cannot rest without salvation, how deep an impression should that make on those as yet unconverted! Are you not afraid of hearing those words, "I never knew you?" But how may it be prevented? Only in one way—by making acquaintance with Christ now. You must now become united to him by faith, have communion with him in prayer, be led by his voice; then you will be his, and never, never will he say to you, "I know you not."

"Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour when the Son of Man cometh." This is our Lord's own application of the parable. He does not commend the wise virgins for slumbering. It was injurious to them as well as fatal to the foolish ones.

"Ye know neither the day nor the hour when the Son of Man cometh." Had it been known by the disciples that he would not come for eighteen hundred years, it could have excited no feeling of watchfulness. We cannot watch for that which we know will happen after we are dead. But they did not know it. Paul did not know it, or he would hardly have said, "We which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord." It might be more distant, or it might be nearer, as far as their knowledge went; they knew not the day nor the hour when the Son of Man should come.

We know that we are more than eighteen hundred years nearer to the event than they were. That does not diminish the force of the warning. Its force manifestly lies in this, that you cannot say it is at a great distance, not that you cannot say it is near. If any one should say to me, "I know that a thousand years must elapse before the Son of Man cometh," I should answer, "Then in the sense of our text you do know the day and the hour when the Son of Man cometh; you so far know it as to take away all room for watchfulness."

But the fact that this sign and that sign is happening, which shows the Advent to be nigh, is no contradiction whatever to the statement, "Ye know not the day nor the hour;" on the contrary, it adds em-

phasis to it. The more sure we are that the Son of Man cannot be far off, the more urgent is the exhortation to watch, because we know not the day nor the hour of his arrival. Signs there are in abundance; but the most impressive in some respects, and certainly the most blessed, is this awakening of souls. It seems to tell us plainly of the Bridegroom's coming. Sometimes for wise and loving purposes, events which will burst forth in greatness are shown beforehand in miniature. I think such is the case with this awakening now, it represents, on a small scale, what an impression will be made by the cry, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh!" Only now it is not too late to seek salvation—not too late to get oil. The saved and the unsaved also may see in this a sign of the Bridegroom's approach; we know not the day nor the hour, but surely he is near.

"Ye know not the day nor the hour when the Son of Man cometh." Then we ought to be ready for the day whenever it may come. There is a distinction here. Some are ready, ready so far that the sound of his advent would be the most joyful sound that could reach the ears. Others are not ready, so unready that the trump of the archangel would be the death-knell of all their hopes, and the consummation of their ruin. What utter madness to leave this matter undecided. To sleep is to perish.

The only wise course is to awake at once. You know not the day nor the hour when he comes. Then this day and this hour awake; you have no time to lose; you have no reason for thinking that if you lose to-day, you will ever have another opportunity. You are feeling at this moment the necessity for waking, but

Satan is using every effort to enchain you. He is afraid of losing you, and only asks you to delay till to-morrow, knowing better than you do that now is the accepted time, and the day of salvation. Oh! foolish virgin, slumbering without oil in your lamp, unprepared to meet the Bridegroom, what if you should sleep on till it is too late. "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."

Perhaps you have not read thus far, without being convinced that you are unconverted, without many an anxious thought having crossed your mind, and many a desire been kindled not to be found among the foolish ones at last. You have made resolutions, and they have snapped like burnt threads. You have tried to pray, and prayer would not come. You are wavering between two opinions, uncertain what to do. Perhaps you are almost in despair. Oh, if the arrow of conviction has penetrated your soul—if your sleep of death is disturbed, and you are asking, what shall I do? How shall I get oil? I cannot pray. Resolutions I cannot keep. I cannot make myself better, but seem growing worse. My lamp is going out. It was lighted in ignorance or self-righteousness, and is going out in despair, and when it is quite out, what will become of me? what shall I do? Do?—what he did who, when he was ready to sink, cried, "Save, Lord, or I perish;" what she did who, rather than go away unhealed, touched the hem of the Saviour's garment; what that father did who said, with tears, "Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief." He is able and willing to save you now. It is not too late now. The Master

of the house has not risen and shut to the door—you may enter in now. “What I say unto you, I say unto all—Watch!” If unconverted, awake, for you are perishing; if a believer, keep awake, for you are saved. “Watch; for ye know not the day, nor the hour, when the Son of Man cometh.”

CHAPTER VII.

THE JEW AND THE GENTILE.

THE Jew and the Gentile are the woof and the warp of prophecy. They form the subjects of distinct prediction, and are as separate in the history of the future as in the history of the past. The Gentile line does sometimes cross the Jewish line, and the meeting-places of the two are points of intense interest; but they meet to part, and must be considered by themselves, if considered correctly. The neglect of this separate treatment of Jewish and Gentile prophecy, has led to error in two directions. One class of commentators, seeing nothing but the Jew in prophecy, have been driven to deny the fulfilment of large portions of it, which contain the history of the world during the times of the Gentiles; while another class of commentators, more accurate in their interpretation of what has been historically fulfilled, have not given due attention to Israel's future.

The right course seems to be to trace out each line separately; to look at the Gentile prophecies, and arrange them as well as we can, with no reference to the Jewish prophecies; then to take these and follow the same plan; and, lastly, to seek for points of *synchronism* between the two, which may enable us to ascertain

the position in which one stands with respect to the other.

Without adopting this course, we cannot fail to find ourselves involved in inextricable confusion. For God's purposes respecting Israel, and God's purposes respecting his Church, seem, as far as we may venture to speak of them, so totally distinct that they cannot be mingled in one view. His dealings with Israel, from the call of Abraham to the furthest point in the coming ages at which we catch a glimpse of them, have all reference to the renewal of this earth, and the completion of God's ultimate design respecting it interrupted by the Fall. However far we follow the line of Jewish prophecy, it only leads us among the countless generations of a transfigured world. We lose ourselves in a distance of which we can see no horizon, with Jerusalem for earth's metropolis, and Abraham's children a blessing to all nations. But God has other purposes respecting his Church. Her future is a heavenly one—her Jerusalem from above—her connection with earth altogether of a different character; and in order to think aright of them we must look at them by themselves, without confusing them with what God is going to do with respect to Israel.

The points at which the two lines of prophecy meet, or, rather, cross, are at the manifestation of Christ. At Christ's first coming, this coincidence of the two lines is a striking feature. Christ is promised to both Jews and Gentiles. In the Gentile line of prophecy we meet with Christ's advent as the cutting out of the stone without hands in Nebuchadnezzar's vision, destined ultimately to break the image in pieces; and in the Jewish line, as the birth of the virgin's Son, to sit on David's

throne. It is one of the converging points of prophecy; its distinct lines meet at the cross as in a focus, and then separate. In Isaiah and Zechariah we have a very detailed series of predictions respecting Israel; so we have in Jeremiah and Ezekiel. It is quite possible to draw from those books a connected history of the future of that nation, while, in the vision of the four kingdoms of Daniel, and in the book of Revelation, we have an equally detailed, though more symbolical, prediction of the history of Gentile nations. Both lines of prophecy coincide in Christ's reign over earth; both touch on the same point—Christ's second advent. But for this point of union we could not have discovered any mutual relation between them. It is the entire independence of Jewish and Gentile prophecy which is necessary to the proper understanding of either. Each must be considered separately. They are distinct airs, with only points of unison—the first and second advent—though doubtless constituting, through their whole course, one glorious harmony.

It is equally unreasonable to find the Christian Church in the Jerusalem of Isaiah, where there is no appearance of symbolism; and the Jew in the manifest symbolism of the Apocalyptic hundred and forty and four thousand from all the tribes of Israel. Isaiah was prophesying to Jews, and the greatest portion of his prophecy concerns that nation. St. John wrote to Gentile churches, and what he wrote related mainly to Gentiles. This is just as we should expect. The reason is so obvious as not to need stating, and it requires much stronger argument than any hitherto advanced to convince us either that Isaiah, writing in Jerusalem *to Jews*, meant by Jerusalem the Christian Church, or

that St. John intended, by Jerusalem that cometh down out of heaven from our God, an earthly city which has been trodden under foot by the Chaldee, the Roman, the Saracen, the Crusader, and the Turk.

This confusion of two distinct things is found in almost all writers on prophecy. Looking exclusively at the Jewish line of prophecy makes the futurist, for the very obvious reason that Israel's glory is yet future; looking exclusively at the Gentile line makes the historical commentator, for the equally sufficient reason that the times of the Gentiles are almost run out. Each is right in his own department. There are differences among historical commentators as to events already fulfilled, and very wide differences among futurist writers as to the destinies of the Jewish nation; but in those main points in which each agrees with those of his own school they are right in their different spheres, the one being able to trace the great outline of God's dealings with the Church and the Gentiles nations, the other the prominent features of Israel's future.

It is not in itself improbable that as the lines converge towards Christ's second advent, they should have mutual relations, and throw light upon each other. It is this which seems to the writer one of the unexplored parts of prophetic interpretation. It is obvious that if such be the case, a neglect of those relations may lead to very serious error. Suppose, for instance, that some one state of things should be broad enough to affect each line—that at some particular period there should be an evil of sufficient magnitude and intensity to colour in different ways both the Jewish line and the Gentile—we must examine it in both points of view, or we may form quite a mistaken conception of its nature. Such

I believe to be actually the case. Each line passes through the shadow of a dark and deep tribulation, becoming more intense as we approach to their convergence. Looked at only from the Jewish line, and seen to have at one time its seat in Jerusalem itself, it might not unnaturally be regarded as originating in a Jewish source; but as there are reasons which make it probable that it is but another aspect of the same wide-spreading evil which meets us in the Gentile line, we are able to bring to bear upon it a flood of additional light, showing us that the supposed Jewish Antichrist is really the development of an apostasy springing out of the Christian Church.

The two lines of prophecy do not, as I think, coincide absolutely in any part of Antichrist's reign, as they do at the coming of Christ; but they are constantly converging, and the last conflict of the Church and the last affliction of Israel have so close a connection in their course, their issue, and their circumstances, that while to be understood aright they must be traced out separately, when so traced out they explain each other's difficulties, and, in their combination, wonderfully illustrate each other.

I will endeavour briefly to indicate the sources of these two lines of prophecy. The Gentile is, as seems to me, by far the more interesting and important to ourselves, and occupies in the Bible itself the first and the last place. It begins with the primeval promise, which, from the nature of the case, is world-wide, and gives no peculiar distinction to Israel. All prophecy, both Jewish and Gentile, may be looked at, in a certain sense, as developing itself from the promise, that the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head. It is, as it were,

the common segment of the two great branches, and from its extreme generality may include both.

In Noah's prediction we have the first trace of a separation. The promise to Shem is the embryo of the Jewish line, and that to Japheth of the Gentile line. I think that Noah's importance, as the first founder of the Church of the Gentiles, has been to a considerable degree overlooked. There are many passages in Scripture which show that, in God's eye, a Gentile Church, though in a most depressed condition, did exist all through those times of ignorance, at which St. Paul says God winked. God had entered into covenant with Noah as the common forefather of all nations. Godliness was not at first confined to any single line of his descendants. There were those among the sons of Japheth who feared the Lord, if not among the sons of Ham; and it might have been hoped that there would spring up, after the flood, generations of believers wherever the earth was peopled. All this bright prospect was soon overclouded. The Church of many nations lapsed into idolatry, forsook her God, and was cast out by him, while he formed for himself another Church of one nation—that of Israel.

Our Lord seems to recognise the existence of this Gentile Church in the expression, "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold;" and it is expressly asserted in those words of St. John, in which he explains the prophecy of Caiaphas—"He prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation, and not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad."

It was not a new thing that Gentiles should be God's children. There were Jobs, and Ruths, and

Naamans, men like the Wise Men from the East, and women like the Queen of Sheba, scattered abroad in the darkest periods of earth's history. We are not able to trace their existence except in the few instances mentioned in the Bible ; but we have no reason whatever for concluding that these were all. We know that there were those who, while destitute of all godliness, drew thoughts from the inspired writings which have made their names famous ; and there may have been those whose names have not come down to us, who drew from the same sources life and light. However few, we know from Scripture that there were some, and that when God called the Gentiles, the Church then formed was not looked upon as a new one, but as the forsaken one brought back.

One portion of Isaiah's prophecy has exclusive regard to this Church. It commences at the end of the fifty-third chapter, and closes with the fifty-seventh. It is natural to expect that after the description of Christ's atoning work, some reference should be made to the calling of the Gentiles ; and if we had no other guide, we might fairly have concluded that such must be the subject of the fifty-fourth chapter. But we are not left to conjecture : St. Paul's quotation from it is quite decisive. In that passage in Galatians in which he is contrasting the earthly Jerusalem with the heavenly, he distinctly interprets the chapter in this sense : "It is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not; for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband."

This prophecy to the Gentiles in the midst of Isaiah is full of the most blessed promises and the most free *invitations*; but, like every other prophecy of this dis-

pensation, it ends under a cloud. The fifty-seventh chapter describes a state of apostasy, and the prophet seems on closing it to turn away from the Church of the Gentiles to his own people, with whose glowing future all the remainder of his prophecy is filled.

In most of the Prophets there are some slight notices of the Gentile line; but it is in Daniel that the predictions on this subject are most distinct. Nebuchadnezzar's golden image contains the grand outline of Gentile history, which is more distinctly filled up by Daniel's own visions of empires under the symbol of wild beasts, and the direct prophecy with which his book concludes. The Apocalyptic visions have so evident a bearing on those of Daniel, that they must belong to the same chain and be considered together; and our Lord's own prophecy on the Mount, referring as it does to Daniel's prophecy, helps to explain it. To this we must add St. Paul's predictions of the apostasy to spring up in the bosom of the Christian Church, and we shall have the chief sources of information as to the Gentile line. The greater part of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Zechariah, and the other prophets, is occupied with the Jewish line. Our Lord's prophecy on the Mount refers to this as well as to the other; and both in Daniel, and even to a less degree in the Apocalypse,* while only in a subordinate degree it is not left unnoticed.

But that which is essential to our right understanding of either of these lines of prophecy, is to keep them separate; to examine each as though the other did not exist, and then to compare them together, ascertain their points of union, their correspondences, and, as from two independent witnesses, form a connected view

* In Rev. xvi, 12, "The kings of the East."

of earth's future history. My present purpose is more limited. I wish to examine chiefly one particular portion of the Gentile line of prophecy, bearing on the immediate future of Christ's Church; and for this purpose we will first consider the ten-horned beast, or apostate empire of Daniel and Revelation.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE APOSTATE EMPIRE.

SYMBOLICAL prophecy is mainly occupied with the history of the Gentile empires. Written under their shadow, and intended for the instruction and comfort of God's people in perilous times, it was consistent with the wisdom of God so to veil it that it should not increase their danger and expose them to persecution. For the same reason it is, we may venture to conjecture, that the same symbols are repeated in Daniel and the Apocalypse, in such a manner that it is only by a comparison of the two we can fully interpret either. These pictures of the world were not to be accessible to men of the world. A certain difficulty was to be thrown around their decipherment which would make them real hieroglyphics, sacred signs, understood only by those who patiently should search the Oracles of God. Had it been otherwise, the jealous scrutiny of the Romans, if not of the Babylonians or Persians, would have found in them abundant materials for accusing their possessors; and the strong hand of power might have imitated the act of that Jewish king, who, when Jeremiah prophesied against him, cut up the roll of the book with a penknife, and threw it into the fire.

The most remarkable of these symbols is that of a wild beast with seven heads and ten horns. It appears,

with certain differences, four times; first, in the seventh chapter of Daniel; secondly, in the twelfth chapter of Revelation; thirdly, in the thirteenth chapter of that book; and fourthly, in the seventeenth; and no interpretation can be considered complete which does not explain all four, and assign a reason for their differences.

The general meaning of the symbol is so plainly stated in the Book of Daniel as to remove all doubt. The ten-horned beast appeared to him in vision, as the last of four which arose out of the sea. The prophet asked for an explanation and received it. "I, Daniel, was grieved in my spirit in the midst of my body, and the visions of my head troubled me. I came near unto one of them that stood by and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me, and made me know the interpretation of the things. These great beasts, which are four, are four kings which shall arise out of the earth." And then, in answer to a still further inquiry respecting the fourth beast, which Daniel had observed to play a much more conspicuous part than the other three, his heavenly guide proceeded: "The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and tread it down, and break it in pieces. And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise."*

Daniel could not but perceive that the word "king," and the word "kingdom," were used interchangeably. Considering that the fourth beast is expressly called one of "four kings," in verse 17, and the "fourth kingdom," in verse 23, it is strange that any commentators should have made the attempt to attach to the word "king" a personal and individual significa-

* Dan. vii. 15—17, 23, 24.

tion. This much was clearly taught him, that four great kingdoms were to come successively in contact with the chosen people, and to aim at universal sovereignty. There were four such empires—the Babylonian, the Medo-Persian, the Grecian, and the Roman—already known to Daniel as forming component parts of the great image seen by Nebuchadnezzar in his dream. The ten-horned beast is the fourth of these kingdoms, that is, the Roman; and Daniel was taught to look upon the ten horns, like the ten toes of the image, as representatives of ten kingdoms, into which the Roman empire should be broken up without being dissolved.

In Revelation xii. 3, this ten-horned and seven-headed* beast appears again as persecuting the Church, with crowns on its heads but not on its horns. It is the Roman empire before its division into ten kingdoms, and before the rise of the Papacy, when the imperial power was used in the vain attempt to prop up Paganism by persecuting the Church.

The Church spoken of is no outward community, no earthly polity; for she is clothed with the sun, and has the moon under her feet. A woman is so frequent an emblem for the Church, that we have assumed such to be its signification here; but it must be borne in mind that it may be used as an emblem for the Church in two distinct ways. Christ is the husband and the Church is his bride; that is one light in which a woman is the appropriate emblem for the Church. The Church on earth gives birth to the Church in heaven. The weak and persecuted woman is to be succeeded by the man-child; the Church in her feebleness by the Church

* The seven heads are not mentioned in Daniel.

glorified, which is to rule all nations with a rod of iron. That is the other light in which we may regard a woman as the appropriate emblem for the Church. In the one case, it is the betrothed bride as contrasted with the married wife; in the other case, it is the feeble mother as contrasted with the strong and vigorous son. It is in this last view that the emblem is used in this passage; but we must not fail to observe that notwithstanding the weakness inherent in the woman flying into the wilderness, she is seen clothed with the sun, treading on the moon, and with twelve stars on her head. Here is another contrast between the woman seen in heaven—that is, looked at as God sees his people—already sitting in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, and the woman seen on earth—that is, as man looks on the Church—a despised outcast without glory or greatness.

The woman being clothed with the sun is in entire harmony with the usual language of Scripture. God is constantly represented as clothing his Church in beautiful garments. We need only refer to that expression in the Psalms, “The King’s daughter is all glorious within, her raiment is of wrought gold.” (Ps. xlv. 13.) In God’s eyes all Christ’s people are arrayed in his righteousness. Notwithstanding their present appearance in the world, and the real evil of which they are conscious in themselves, in God’s eyes they have put on the white robe of Christ’s righteousness, and form part of that glorious Church which has no spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but is holy and without blemish. The sun itself is so frequent an emblem for Christ, that being clothed with the sun is evidently identical with being clothed with Christ.

But what are we to understand by the moon under

her feet? The moon is often supposed to be a type of the visible Church; but there is not a single text in Scripture to support this view. It has also been supposed to be sometimes a type of the spiritual Church, because in Solomon's Song the bride is said to be "fair as the moon, bright as the sun." We do not think that text sufficient proof, or any proof at all; and if it were, in the passage now before us such an explanation is obviously inadmissible. Then what must we understand by the moon under the woman's feet? The world triumphed over by the Church. There is a remarkable text in the Ephesians,* which seems to support this view. Among our spiritual enemies are included "the rulers of the darkness of this world," or "the world-rulers of the darkness of this age." This singular expression is an allusion to the statement in Genesis, that the sun was the ruler of the day, and the moon and the stars the rulers of the night—"the world-rulers of the darkness." St. Paul as much as says there are other rulers of this spiritual darkness which govern the night of sin and ignorance, as much as the moon and stars the natural night. He was writing to Ephesians who in their heathen state had been devoted to the worship of Diana, or the moon, and had once shouted out for the space of two hours, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." And the Apocalypse was sent, in the first instance, to that Asia to which this particular idolatry was so natural. To the Church of Asia Minor the moon, once the principal object of their worship, would be the very type and emblem of everything worldly, of all against which, as Christians, they had to battle.

We are now prepared to interpret the view of the

* Eph. i. 12, "Κοσμοκράτορας τοῦ οὐκότους τὸν ἀιώνος τόντον."

seven-headed beast, as given us in the twelfth chapter of Revelation—the most difficult, as Faber rightly observes, of all these symbolical representations. The “great red dragon” is stated to be the devil, “yet the very circumstance of its peculiar conformation plainly shows that it does not represent the devil *simply* or *abstractedly*. As Satan, in his persecution of the faithful, acts through the instrumentality of visible power and human agents, so in the hieroglyphic his figure is managed after such a manner, that we may at once learn from it the particular power, and the particular agents which he employs as his external instruments during the chronological term of the present vision.”*

That power must be the Roman Empire. We have learned from Daniel that a beast with ten horns is the symbol of the fourth kingdom; and the only question is as to the precise period of time to which the vision refers. The time is, in fact, marked most definitely. The moment of birth was the moment of vision; but this had been preceded by the period during which the woman had been with child. At some part of that period she had been under the government of the Twelve Apostles, as indicated by the crown of twelve stars. This fixes the epoch of the vision to within nine or ten months, or less than three hundred prophetic days, or years, of the apostolic age. How long before the birth of the man-child the dragon stood before the woman, threatening to devour her offspring, is not stated; but in less than three hundred years from the apostolic age, the birth of the man-child must have taken place. The man-child is Christ mystical; the Church considered as Christ’s body.

* Faber’s “Sacred Calendar,” vol. iii., p. 113.

It is the Church glorified, in opposition to the Church persecuted. Now we must here have recourse to a principle laid down by Elliott, and most successfully employed in the "Horæ Apocalypticæ," that the prophet himself is often a typical man, and, as such, represents the men of God in the particular period to which the vision belongs. The birth of the man-child seemed to John the manifestation upon earth of the Church glorified. He knew that the child was to rule all nations with a rod of iron, and when the woman brought forth the man-child, he undoubtedly thought that time had arrived. In this he represented the Christian men who saw in the revolution which overthrew Paganism the beginning of the Church's glory. Instead of this, the man-child, Christ's mystical body, was caught up to God, and to his throne—became invisible. When godly men thought that the manifestation of the sons of God had come, it proved to be a mistake. The Church glorified must be in heaven; the Church persecuted must fly into the wilderness. The revolution under Constantine, great in its appearances, will only change the circumstances of trial. The beast must slightly alter his form, and the dragon his tactics; but the hour has not arrived for the Church glorified to be visible on earth.

A great difficulty has been thought to exist in interpreting this vision of Rome under its pagan emperors, from the position of the words which have been supposed to intimate that the commencement of the 1260 prophetic days commence with the birth of the man-child. But the answer to this objection is easy. There are three periods of time mentioned: that previous to the birth of the man-child, the time occupied in the woman's

flight, and the 1260 years after her arrival in the wilderness. During the first of these periods she was exposed to the fury of the great red dragon, Satan, acting through the pagan emperors; during the second, while flying into the wilderness—that transition period in which God was separating his own people from the great body of professing Christendom, a process described in another vision as the sealing of the mystic tribes of Israel—she was pursued, by the efforts of Satan to destroy her altogether, by floods of Arian and other heresies; and, during the third, she was nourished from the face of the serpent a time, and times, and half a time, that is, 1260 prophetic days or years.

It is not unimportant to observe that both the woman and the man-child are neither of them actual representations of the Church, but rather abstract symbols standing for certain ideas. The man-child being caught up to God and his throne does not imply the ascension of any individual members of the Church, but only teaches us that when the idea of a glorified Church on earth seemed on the point of being realized, a state of things arose which forced on the mind of all whose eyes were open the ~~viction~~ that it must, for the present, be sought for only in heaven. And, in like manner, the woman being nourished for 1260 days in the wilderness, from the face of the serpent, does not imply a freedom from persecution during those years; for it is expressly said, that “the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” The woman represents only the idea of the Church in humiliation, as *the man-child of the Church in glory*. She is a hidden

Church, and Satan cannot hurt her, though constantly persecuting her children.

This distinction is plainly required by the facts of the case. Much is true of the Church as a whole, which is not true of its individual members. She is invisible, but they are seen ; she is out of the reach of the enemy, but they are exposed to his constant assaults. And we know not how it would have been possible accurately to describe the history, without distinguishing between the hidden Church and those of her children who, in their personal capacity, were exposed to persecution. There is a constant confusion among Protestant controversialists on this very point ; some speaking of the true Church as an invisible body ; others pointing to its long line of witnesses, its martyrs and confessors, and pronouncing it visible in all ages. Each view is partially correct. The Church as a whole, as an idea, is invisible. Her children may always be seen, and our prophecy gives expression to each truth by representing the Church herself abstractedly, as the woman nourished in the wilderness, and those who belong to her as the remnant of her seed which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ, made war upon by the dragon.

The great red dragon, standing before the woman, had its heads crowned, but the horns were uncrowned. They had not as yet received their kingdom, because that part of the vision relates to a time previous to the breaking up of the Roman empire into separate kingdoms. This was taking place during the woman's flight, and in the next appearance of the seven-headed and ten-horned beast, in the following chapter, in which his duration is fixed to 1260 days, his horns are crowned.

The empire lost its power, and was succeeded in that by the ten horns, or nations of modern Europe, which, as is observed by Schlegel, the Roman Catholic historian, in his "Philosophy of History," have always on an average been ten. But it did not lose its name; the emperor, whether of Constantinople or Germany, of the East or the West, or the two conjointly, when there were two at once, having always been looked upon as the head of the Roman empire, apart from which the European states cannot be properly regarded.*

"The whole of Christendom composed, as it were, a single and individual republic, of which the Pope was the spiritual head, and the Emperor the secular."† The religion of the empire, thus divided and yet united, was not like that of the undivided Roman empire, mere heathenism or Christianity, but a heathenized Christianity, or a christened heathenism, in which God was blasphemed far more than by mere paganism, and on which he has himself stamped the brand of blasphemy.

This is the most natural place for considering the signification of the seven heads, which are the characteristics of the beast in the Apocalypse. It is represented with seven heads, but we are distinctly informed that they are successive,‡ and not contemporaneous; while the horns, on the contrary, receive power at the same time.§

The meaning of the seven heads is assigned in Revelation xvii. Indeed, two meanings are given to the symbol. A geographical one—"The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth;" a state-

* Sir Francis Palgrave's "History of Anglo-Saxons," *preface*.

† Koch, quoted in Riddle's "Chronology."

‡ Rev. xvii.

§ "μέσαν δραπετῶν," Rev. xvii. 12.

ment of the utmost importance as identifying the beast with the empire of the seven-hilled city; and a political one—"And there are seven kings; five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come, and when he cometh, he must continue a short space." We have already seen, in Daniel, that the word "king" is not used in prophecy in a personal sense. St. John's assertion is plainly this, the Roman empire was symbolized by a beast with seven heads, not only because the city of Rome is seated on seven hills, but also because it would be, during its whole duration, governed by seven successive forms of polity, of which five had fallen in St. John's days, one existed, and one was still future.

With respect to the one which existed in St. John's days, no difference of opinion is possible. It was the Roman emperorship. There is an unimportant variation as to the mode of reckoning the five previous forms of government. Tacitus enumerates six—the kingship, the consulate, the dictatorship, the decemvirate, the military tribuneship, and the triumvirate. Some commentators omit from this list the last, as being rather a revolutionary interregnum than a regular form of government; and Faber omits the first, on the ground that the regal government was not a fallen form in St. John's days, but identical with that of the Roman emperors. I am satisfied with neither solution, and the true one seems ready to our hands. Tacitus, in his enumeration, expressly refers to the fact that the dictatorship was only taken as a temporary office. In fact, it overruled for the time, but did not supersede the actually existing government. It was like the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act in England; not an alteration in the constitution, but a mere

expedient to meet a present difficulty. The only real forms of government which had a permanent existence prior to the emperorship were the kingship, the consulate, the decemvirate, the military tribuneship, and the triumvirate. These five had fallen, and one still was, when St. John was writing, and long afterwards—the Roman emperorship.

The important question is as to the right interpretation of what follows: "The other is not yet come, and when he cometh he must continue a short space." What is this seventh head? In all that relates to the heads we may, and must, compare together the various descriptions of the seven-headed beast; for though its different appearances are at different epochs of time, the interpretation of its heads must necessarily be independent of this difference, inasmuch as in themselves they contain the history of its whole duration. In the 17th chapter, St. John had a vision of a period when the beast itself would, for a time, cease to exist, and then revive. "And the beast that was and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seventh, and goeth into perdition," which is explained by the corresponding statement in chapter xiii. "I saw one of his heads, as it were, wounded to death, and his deadly wound was healed, and all the world wondered after the beast." And in the 14th verse of the same chapter it is further stated that it was by the sword this deadly wound was inflicted. When this stroke was inflicted the beast was without a living head, and, therefore, was not; when the deadly wound was healed, the beast itself revived in its living head.

We have seen that the sixth head, or Roman emperorship, existing in St. John's days, was to be followed by a seventh head, not of long duration, to be slain by

the sword, and then to revive again, forming an eighth head, which yet would be identical with the seventh, and under which the beast would go into perdition. It is in this last form that it is described in the 17th chapter. The question is, when did the sixth head, or Roman emperorship die, and, on its extinction, what form of government took its place as head of the Roman world?

It is an historical fact that the Roman emperorship lasted till the year 1806. When the eastern and western empires were actually divided, they were looked upon as still in theory one. About the year 476, Augustulus abdicated, and the emperor of the East became sole emperor, the Roman senate asserting at the time that the majesty of a sole monarch was sufficient to guard and protect at once both the East and the West. Odoacer became king of Italy; but the emperor at Constantinople was still the head of the Roman world. As such Justinian made laws.

The empire remained under a single emperor till the year 800, when Charlemagne was made emperor of the West in St. Peter's, and proclaimed "the most pious Augustus, crowned by God, the great and pacific emperor of the Romans."

In 1453 Constantinople was taken by the Turks, and the eastern emperor ceased. From that time the dignity remained in the West, in the emperor of Germany, so called popularly, but whose official title was "Emperor and King of the Romans;" in which capacity "he has been invariably considered as *the head* of the great European commonwealth."* In the year 1804, the Emperor of Germany recognized the Emperor Napoleon as Emperor of the French, and himself assumed

* "Calendar of Prophecy," iii. 200.

the title of Emperor of Austria ; and, in the year 1806, he formally renounced the empire of the West, and the sixth head of the beast quietly, under diplomatic influence, ceased to be.

The question, then, we have to consider is, what is the seventh head ? What form of government succeeded to that of the Roman emperors, which passed away in August 1806 ?

There is a not unnatural feeling, which stands in the place of an argument, that a commentator on prophecy is influenced too much by present circumstances to be able to form a calm judgment. For this reason, in answering the question before us, we will quote the words of Mr. Faber, written in the year 1828, and we cannot do so without expressing our astonishment at the singular moral courage exhibited in the publication, by a man of Mr. Faber's reputation, of an interpretation at the time so utterly improbable as that which we are now about to lay before our readers.

"What, then, was the polity which succeeded the ancient Roman kingship,* or emperorship, as the manifest head of the empire, and as the master of its seven-hilled capital ? To this question we must plainly answer, the *Francic emperorship*, as established by Napoleon Bonaparte.

"Accordingly, we shall find that, in every particular, the Francic emperorship minutely answers to the prophetic character of the seventh head.

* Mr. Faber considers the old Roman kingship as the same head with the emperorship, reckoning the dictatorship as one of the heads. He calls, therefore, the Roman emperorship the first head instead of the sixth. I have given my reasons above for taking a different view, but it does not affect the interpretation of what follows.

" In the May of the year 1804, Napoleon Bonaparte assumed the official title of *Emperor of the French*; in the March of the year 1805, he became King of Italy; in the August of the year 1806, the first," I should say the sixth, " Roman head fell by the abdication and abolition of the official title of *Emperor of the Romans*; and in the February of the year 1810, it was decreed that the Papal States should be united to the French empire; that of that empire ROME should thenceforth rank as the second city; that the prince imperial should take the title of *King of Rome*, and that the emperors, after having been crowned in the church of Notre Dame, at Paris, should, before the tenth year of their reign, be also crowned in that of St. Peter.

" Here, then, we behold the rise of a new head, distinct in its official designation from all the preceding six heads, enjoying the sovereignty of the metropolitan city, though degrading it from its old metropolitan dignity, springing up at the very time when prophecy leads us to expect its rise, and assuming the new, and hitherto unknown title of *Emperor of the French*. With respect to its power, it may be said to have extended, either directly or indirectly, over the whole Latin empire, with the single exception of England; and in regard to its character as a *Roman* head, the industrious assumption of the eagle as its special military ensign, the affectation of its representative at once to play the part of Augustus and Justinian and Charlemagne, the aping, with whatever success, the manners and customs of the old Romans, and, lastly, the actual sovereignty of Rome itself,—all serve to demonstrate that it was truly the seventh head of the Roman wild beast.

" This seventh head, however, which in the time of

the apostle was not yet come, was destined, we are told, whenever it *should* come, to continue only a short space.

" Such is the chronological notation of the seventh head; and such, formidable and threatening as its aspect might be, has been the fate of the Francic Emperorship. It arose in the May of the year 1804; it fell in the June of the year 1815, having subsisted no more than the brief period of eleven years.

" But the seventh head was not only to be short-lived; its abolition was likewise to be eminently distinguished from the abolition of all its six predecessors. *They* are described as simply *falling* one after another, in consequence (as the prophet may be understood to intimate) of successive *internal* revolutions or regulations; *it* is described as *receiving a deadly wound from a sword*, in consequence (as the prophet, by the rule of antithesis, must obviously be understood to intimate) of some violent external attack.

" With the tenor of the prediction, the actual accomplishment of the event has been found exactly to agree. The prophecy teaches, that the short-lived seventh head should not simply *fall* by any domestic revolution, or political arrangement, but that it should be *mortally wounded* by the sword of foreign war; the Francic emperorship fell not by internal revolution, but, on the ever memorable 18th day of June, in the year 1815, it was mortally wounded by the sword of external violence, in the destined field of Waterloo.

" From what has now been said it appears, that *all* the seven heads of the Roman beast are at present *defunct*; six of them having *fallen* by domestic revolution or political arrangement; and the seventh, agreeably

to the prophecy, having been *slain* by the sword of foreign violence. But the beast is represented as having *no more* than seven heads; whence, upon the slaughter of his seventh and last head, since *all* his heads are now defunct, zoological decorum requires that he himself should be exhibited as sinking into a state of death.

"Accordingly in the hieroglyph the beast dies, when his last surviving head is slain by the sword; and in the verbal interpretation, he is said to sink into a state of political non-existence as an empire, when, after continuing only a short space, his last head perishes. The beast *was*, or existed in actual vitality as an empire from the rise of his first head with Romulus, down to the second inflicted slaughter of his seventh head under Napoleon Bonaparte; the beast *is not*, or ceases to exist as a living empire, when at length, through internal revolution, or external violence, *all* his heads successively become defunct.

"Such is the tenor of the prophecy, as set forth, partly in the pictured hieroglyphic, partly in the verbal interpretation afforded by the angel. Let us now mark its completion, as we may behold it with our own eyes.

"From Romulus down, down even to beyond the year 1806, when the Roman kingship, or emperorship, was finally extinguished, the hieroglyphical wild beast had never been without a living head; and, consequently, under one head or another, he himself had never ceased to live.

"But a very different scene presented itself, when, in the year 1815, the hostile sword of England, wielded by the great captain of the age, inflicted a mortal wound upon the short-lived seventh head. For the first time,

during the lapse of more than twenty-five centuries, *all* the heads of the wild beast now lay dead together; and when the seventh head was slain by the sword, no new head sprang up in its room. The place of the Francic emperorship remained unoccupied. Neither in virtue of a recognized official appellation of supremacy,* nor through a predominance of solid power extending over the whole empire,† can it be said, that since the violent death of the seventh and last head, in the year 1815, any single state within the limits of the Roman world has exercised the function of a head. On the contrary, during the fiercest period of the wild beast's allegorical death, or political non-existence, the great European commonwealth is, even avowedly, moderated and governed by a sort of high police, formed out of a college or corporation of the stronger monarchies, which claiming to regulate the conduct of the weaker sovereignties, professes to watch over the interests, and to preserve the peace of the Roman Ecumè.‡

"Thus, it appears, if there be any justice in the preceding conclusions, that in the year 1815, when the

* "As in the case of the Roman emperors since the time of Charlemagne. Hence Mr. Gibbon remarks, that the supremacy of the emperor was not confined to Germany alone, but that in rank and dignity he was acknowledged to be *THE TEMPORAL HEAD of the great republic of the West.* (See "History of Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," vol. ix. p. 216; also Mackenzie's "Observations on the Proverbs," chap. i. p. 1.)

† "As in the successive cases of Charlemagne and Napoleon, the one as king or emperor of the Romans, the representative of the first head; the other as emperor of the French and king of Italy, the representative of the seventh head.

‡ "See the declaration with which the Congress closed its session at Aix-la-Chapelle, on Nov. 15, 1818.

Francic emperorship was mortally wounded by the sword, we entered * upon the *second* grand chronological period, which the Apocalyptic prophet describes hieroglyphically as the period during which the wild beast should be dead, in consequence of the then defunct condition of all his seven heads, and which the interpreting angel sets forth verbally as the period during which the empire of the seven-hilled city should be in a state of non-existence through the sudden and violent downfall of the short-lived seventh king, or seventh political form of Roman government. On the principles here laid down, the *first* period of the beast's life, or the *first* period of the empire's political existence, namely, the period from the rise of the first head under Romulus to the slaughter of the seventh head under Napoleon is *PAST*; or, in the language of the angelic hierophant, *the wild beast was*. Hence, in regular descent through the great prophetic calendar, as successively expounded and verified by faithful history, we must now, unless my principles be altogether erroneous, have entered upon the *second* period of the beast's death, or the empire's political non-existence; that is to say, in the language of the same angelic hierophant, we must have entered upon the period during which *the wild beast IS NOT*.

" But the interpreting angel mentions yet a *third* period connected with the strangely varied fortunes of the Roman empire.

" *The beast was, and is not, and yet is, or* (as some copies read) *yet shall be.*

" *He was*, as we have just seen, during his term of original existence, from the first foundation of Rome,

* It must not be forgotten that Mr. Faber wrote this in the year 1828.

down to the year 1815, when his seventh and last surviving head was slain by the sword; *he is* not, during the term of his allegorical death or political non-existence as an empire, which term of political nonentity commenced in the year 1815, when, through the mortal wound inflicted upon his last head, *all* his seven heads for the first time in the course of five-and-twenty centuries lay dead together; *he is or SHALL BE*, at some yet future period, during the term of his re-existence, when, restored to the functions of imperial sovereignty, he shall again stand forth as formidable as ever.

“ As the interpreting angel thus divides the entire duration of the wild beast’s empire into three successive periods—that of *his original* existence, that of *his non-existence*, and that of *his re-existence*; or that during which *the beast was*, that during which *the beast is not*, and that during which *the beast SHALL BE*: so both the fashion of the hieroglyphic itself, and the corresponding verbal exposition unite to point out the mode in which the defunct beast should rise from the dead, or should start into political re-existence.

“(1.) With respect to the fashion of the hieroglyphic itself, the prophet describes it very minutely and particularly.

“ I saw, says he, *one of the heads of the beast, as it were, wounded to death, and HIS DEADLY WOUND WAS HEALED: for the beast had a wound, even a DEADLY WOUND, OR A WOUND OF HIS DEATH* * *by a sword, and yet DID LIVE.*

“ Hence, it appears that the slain wild beast will be restored to life by the healing of the mortal wound which he had received from the sword, and which had

* Gr. ἡ πληγὴ τὸν θανάτου ἀντέω.

caused his political death. But his mortal wound, or the wound of his death, was inflicted upon his seventh head. Therefore, when his mortal wound is healed, the head, which received that wound, must plainly be healed likewise. In other words, the slain wild beast will be restored to life by the healing or political revival of his sword-wounded seventh head.

“(2). Such was the future history presented to St. John, and analogous to it is the verbal interpretation of the angel.

*“The beast that thou sawest was and is not, and shall ascend out of the abyss. The beast was and is not, and yet shall be. The seven heads are seven kings. Five are fallen and one is, and THE OTHER is not yet come, and when he cometh he must continue a short space; and he is also an EIGHTH king (in reference to the beast that was and is not *), and he is one of the seven kings.”*

“Here we learn that the wild beast, after sinking into a state of non-existence as an empire, upon the violent death of the seventh head or king, will ascend out of the abyss into a new state of re-existence under an eighth king, who, with reference to the beast during the two successive periods of his original existence and his non-existence, will be the same as the slaughtered seventh king, and will therefore be one of the seven kings in a revived or restored condition.

* This translation of Mr. Faber's is barely allowable. But the text, as translated, in our authorized version, appeared to him to give no meaning. The event has interpreted it. The French Emperor is in a sense in which no other Emperor ever was, the actual representative of the beast. He glories in being the elect of the people, in owing his seat to the popular will, and the sovereignty of the people is involved in the sovereignty of Napoleon III. The beast himself is the eighth head.

"Nothing can be more definite than such language; nor can anything more perfectly accord with the appearance exhibited by the symbol.

"In the symbol the seventh head is slain by the sword, and the beast, *all* his heads being now defunct, sinks into a state of death, but after a certain time, the deadly wound is healed, the slaughtered seventh head revives, and with it the dead beast, to the wonder of all the world, revives likewise.

"In the verbal interpretation the seventh king is extinguished, after continuing only a short space, and the empire, represented by the beast, having no longer any acknowledged paramount form of government, sinks into a state of political non-existence as an empire; but after a certain time the seventh king is restored, the empire along with him ascends to political re-existence as an empire, and thus, with reference to that empire, during its two former states of original existence and of non-existence, the restored seventh king becomes *arithmetically* an eighth king at the head of the revived empire, though *really* he is still only one of the seven kings, because he is the seventh king restored or revived.

"Thus accurately do the symbol and the verbal interpretation answer to each other.

"(3.) The general result of such a comparison is obviously the following one:—

"If the short-lived and sword-slain seventh head be the Francic emperorship, we have it foretold with abundant plainness that the deadly wound of this form of Roman government shall hereafter be healed, and that under this same form (viewed with reference to the two prior conditions of the beast as an eighth, though truly *one of the seven*), the now defunct beast shall both

vive and ascend out of the abyss, and go into final destruction.

" This conclusion accords with what we read of the activity of the wild beast under the sixth vial, and of its ultimate overthrow under the seventh vial. For, agreeably to the prophecy, *all* the heads of the beast are now dead, and the beast himself therefore is defunct. But under the sixth and seventh vials he is alive and active. Therefore, since the effusion of at least the seventh vial is manifestly future, he must, in order to accomplish the yet unfulfilled predictions respecting him, hereafter revive under the rule of that eighth king, who is declared to be the same as the sword-slain seventh king.

" The abyss from which he ascends into his *predicted* but *yet future* state of political re-existence, is the sea out of which Daniel and St. John alike describe him as ascending into his *original*, but *now past*, state of political existence; for *the abyss* and *the sea* are synonymous terms, by which the great assemblage of oceanic waters is alike designated. But the sea, according to the invariable use of the word in the figured language of prophecy, denotes a nation, or an aggregate of nations, in a turbid state of warfare or revolution. As the Roman beast therefore, like his predecessors in empire, the other beasts of Daniel, came up from the stormy sea (or as Bishop Newton rightly understands the term) *from the commotions of the world*, when under Romulus he commenced his first period of existence, so will he similarly come up from the abyss, or out of some agitated nation, or aggregate of nations, when under the revived Francic emperorship he shall commence his second period of existence, or his period of re-existence.

"This expectation of the revival of the Francic emperorship, previous to the wild beast's going into ultimate destruction, rests no doubt upon the propriety of my application of the seventh Roman head. But whether that application be proper or improper, *this* at least is certain, that there at present exists not any living head of the Roman empire; whence, so far as I can judge, it must inevitably follow that the Roman empire *itself* is no longer in a state of political existence. If, then, the Roman empire has *now* ceased to exist, it is quite clear that the predictions respecting its *yet future* destruction in Palestine *cannot* receive their accomplishment, unless the extinct empire shall be restored to life and activity. Now, according to the Apocalypse, this necessary restoration is effected by the healing of the short-lived and sword-slain seventh head. Hence, if the seventh head be the Francic emperorship, it cannot but follow, from the very terms of the prophecy, that in the person of some or other successful adventurer, the Francic emperorship will be revived, while the reanimated wild beast is emerging from the agitated abyss of some tremendous political revolution." *

This, be it remembered, was written in the year 1828, during the reign of Louis XVIII. of France, when Napoleon Bonaparte was dead, and Louis Napoleon a child, unnoticed and uncared for. Its writer lived long enough to see his interpretation of the prophecy in a fair way of accomplishment, and republished, in 1853, what he had written in 1828. It was essential to the fulfilment—at all events, it adds very much to its striking character—that the revived dynasty should be identical with the slain dynasty. This it actually is.

* *Faber's "Sacred Calendar of Prophecy,"* vol. iii., p. 208—220.

It did not seem of great importance to Louis Napoleon to maintain the rights of the child in whose favour Napoleon abdicated at Fontainebleau, whose reign lasted a few days, and whose name and existence were almost forgotten by the men of this generation. The doing so added much to his difficulties, at first, with the nations of Europe, who dreaded any identification of the present empire with the past. Yet an over-ruling hand made him resolve on declaring himself not an emperor *de novo*, the founder of a dynasty, but the lineal successor in a dynasty already founded, and he was proclaimed Napoleon III.

With this desire for hereditary right, it might have been supposed that he would have rested his claim to the imperial throne altogether upon that, instead of which, he sought and obtained an election to it by universal suffrage. This is the peculiarity of the present empire. The French nation feels itself in a way in which it never has been before represented in its head. It is this conviction which reconciles that nation to the total loss of its liberty. It is a very remarkable fact, that it is expressly said, "the beast that was, and is not, he is the eighth." This has led many commentators to consider the eighth head as a democratical form of government, in which the governed would be the governors, the people their own head—a very plausible interpretation, if it were not for the following words—"and is of the seven." It was to be the same head with one of the preceding ones. The only mode in which these two statements can be reconciled appears to be some arrangement such as that under which the Emperor Napoleon III. now holds his throne, according to the legend on his coins, "By the grace of God and

the will of the people," under the sanction of connection with one of the seven forms of government, and yet the elect of the nation.

Perhaps we may expect a more distinct claim of Roman emperorship by Napoleon III., to mark his assumption of the full characteristics of Eighth Head of the Beast. What I consider to be really proved is, that this bad pre-eminence belongs to his dynasty, however probable it is that it belongs to himself personally. At present he is only "Emperor of the French," and has not, like his uncle, affected to assume the honours of the Emperor of Rome. Coronation by the Pope is one way in which that claim might be made. The assumption by the "Child of France," as his son is called, of the title of "King of Rome," would be another mode of asserting the same dignity. And perhaps the expression, "the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth," may need for its fulfilment an election, in some way, by the whole Roman world.

It appears to me a very adventurous thing to express any decided opinion on the prophetical dates; yet they are so much bound up with the predictions respecting the beast, that they can hardly be passed by altogether.

Besides the seventy weeks of Daniel, certainly fulfilled, there are eight other periods of time which have to be accounted for by the interpretation of chronological prophecy.

1. The 2300 days after which the sanctuary is to be cleansed.
2. The seven times of the prefigurative insanity of Nebuchadnezzar, typical, as it would seem, of the great monarchies in their alienation from God.

3. The three times and a-half, Dan. xii. 7—25, alluded to perhaps in Rev. x. 6.
4. The thousand two hundred and sixty days, Rev. xi. 3, xii. 6.
5. The forty and two months, Rev. xi. 2, xiii. 5.
6. The three days and a-half, Rev. xi. 9.
7. The thousand two hundred and ninety days, Dan. xii. 11.
8. The thousand three hundred and five and thirty days, Dan. xii. 12.

Of these eight dates we may dismiss from our present consideration the first, as having no connection apparently with our present subject. It occurs altogether in the Jewish line of prophecy, and while its termination may possibly synchronize with one of the others, we must, according to our principle, leave it on one side while examining the period belonging to the Gentile line. The second of these periods, that of seven times, rests upon an interpretation of an event in Nebuchadnezzar's life, the prophetic bearing of which is so purely hypothetical, that it cannot have any primary importance, except, perhaps, as an intimation that the word "time" may be looked on as a synonyme for "year."

The two last periods, though already closed, have their value, not only as instances of chronological prophecy fulfilled, but also as giving additional proof to the correctness of the interpretation of a day by a year.

The commencement of the 1290 years is expressly stated to be "the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up," which last expression is referred by our Lord himself to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans.

This was well understood at the time of the close of the 1290 years, and comforted God's saints not a little in one of the darkest periods of their history. In the year 1390, Walter Brute, an Englishman, in a book entitled "The Revelation of Antichrist in Britain," wrote as follows: " Yet is she (the Church of Rome) ignorant that within a little time shall come the days of her destruction. Because that from the time the continual sacrifice was taken away, and the abomination of desolation placed, there was passed 1290 days according to Daniel. And the chronicles added do agree to the same." The fact is, that counting forwards from the year 70, the date of the destruction of Jerusalem, 1290 years, "we get A.D. 1360, the precise year in which *John Wickliffe* first began to preach against the errors of the Church of *Rome*, at *Oxford*, in *England*, who may justly be styled the *harbinger of the Reformation, England's Morning Star.*"*

The thousand three hundred and five and thirty days must have the same commencement. "Blessed is he that waiteth and cometh to the 1335 days," "is," as Hales well puts it, "evidently a continuation of the former sentence, announcing a later period, to be counted from the same fixed date, A.D. 70, which will bring us to a more advanced stage of the *Reformation*, when *John Huss* began to preach against the corruptions of the Church of *Rome*, at *Prague* in *Bohemia*, A.D. 1405."†

These striking fulfilments fix conclusively the prophetic meaning of a day, and enable us much more confidently to proceed to the three times and a-half of

* Hales' Analysis of Chronology, vol. ii. p. 522.

† Hales' Analysis, vol. ii. p. 524.

Daniel,* and the one thousand two hundred and sixty years of the Apocalypse.

It is impossible to doubt that in Daniel iv. 32, the word "time" is used as identical with the word "year," or the word "day." That is to say, that Nebuchadnezzar's madness lasted seven years, and that "time" was used by Daniel either literally or symbolically for a year. We naturally ask why, since we know from the Apocalypse that there is a great prophetical period of twelve hundred and sixty days or years, if the three times and a-half in Daniel vii. and xii. coincide with it, it is differently expressed, especially as in the twelfth chapter the word "day" is, as we have seen, twice actually used prophetically for a year? And if in consequence of this difficulty, and remembering that there is in Revelation another period of three days and a-half mentioned, we should be inclined to identify it with that, the same question would apply with even more force, why does Daniel use the word "time" instead of the word "day"? Whatever the reason, it appears to me plain that there is an intentional ambiguity. If "a time" means literally a year, twelve hundred and sixty days would have been a simpler expression for as many years than three times and a-half, or if "a time," in its unsymbolical meaning, is "a day," three days and a-half would have been more easily understood as three years and a-half in connection with the context, than would three times and a-half. In short, explain it how we will, there is an intentional ambiguity—a fact which itself in prophecy always needs interpretation.

An exactly corresponding ambiguity occurs in Reve-

* *Dan. vii. 25, xii. 7.*

lation, in consequence of the occurrence of the phrase "forty and two months," in the eleventh and thirteenth chapters. For while, as we have seen, we have abundant proof that a day means prophetically a year, as we have no absolute proof whether a time in a prophecy is a prophetical day or a prophetical year, so have we no proof, *a priori*, whether the expression forty and two months is used as identical with twelve hundred and sixty prophetical days, or with three actual years and a-half. It is quite a possible hypothesis that it may be used for the very purpose of showing that the time is not the prophetical period expressed by the twelve hundred and sixty days. I do not assert such to be the fact, but only contend that both in Daniel and in the Apocalypse there are fixed periods of prophetic days, the length of which is certain, and a period of times in the one, and months in the other, respecting which there is an intentional ambiguity as to whether it corresponds with the 1260 days, or the three days and a-half.

These two periods are, as I conceive, fixed as twelve hundred and sixty years, and three years and a-half respectively.

The twelve hundred and sixty years are the period of the woman's sojourning in the wilderness,* and of the prophecy of the witnesses;† in other words, of the protest of the hidden Church and witnessing Churches against prevailing apostasy. The three years and a-half is the period during which the witnesses lie dead in the street of the great city.‡

In order to date the commencement of the 1260

* Rev. xii. 6.

† Rev. xi. 9.

‡ Rev. xi. 8.

years, what we want to know is, the moment when, in God's eye, the Church of Rome became apostate, and the witnesses put on their sackcloth. This, in the nature of things, we cannot be sure of. The most probable dates appear to us to be those adopted by Hales on the one side, and Faber on the other. Hales considers that the Roman and Mahometan impostures may be considered as rising together, and adopts as his date the year of the Hejira, A.D. 620. Faber prefers the edict of Phocas, A.D. 606, in which he is followed by many others. In the one case, the 1260 years will end in 1880, in the other case, in 1866. Each of these views appears to me very plausible; but though to both of them a high degree of probability attaches, I have no wish to offer a decided opinion as to whether one or either of them is correct.

But whenever the 1260 years terminate, then will come the three years and a-half. In this I agree with a whole host of commentators before Faber, though scarcely with one in the present day. I shall enter upon this more fully presently, and only now express a strong opinion that the three years and a-half are the last three years and a-half of the twelve hundred and sixty years of the Church's trial.

A few words may be added respecting the two dates of "three times and a-half," and "forty-two months," which appear to involve an intentional ambiguity. We have seen that in one respect the 1260 years, and the three years and a-half are similar periods, each being a season of tribulation to the Church, but the shorter period filled up with more intense affliction. In fact, the short period is the consummation of the long period. We first meet with the three times and a-half

in Daniel vii. 25: "He shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws; and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time." It is evident that the expression "given into his hand," will correspond either with the period of the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth, or with the period of their lying dead. And it may be just to meet this ambiguity, that the equally ambiguous expression "three times and the dividing of a time" is used, which may be three prophetical years and a-half, or three prophetical days and a-half, 1260 years, or three years and six months.

Precisely the same observation applies to the expression "a time, times, and a-half," in Daniel xii. 7, which is defined as the length of the time of the end, and apparently of Antichrist's accomplishing to scatter the power of the holy people, both which expressions suit the longer and shorter periods of the Church's tribulation, differing from each other only in intensity. Here again the ambiguous form of date appears to be adopted, suiting either, or rather both, solutions.

I admit that there is greater difficulty in giving this double meaning to the expression, "a time and times and half a time," in Rev. xii. 14, though it may be done, and perhaps may help to explain, confessedly the most difficult chapter in the Apocalypse.

The expression, "forty and two months," occurs in Rev. xi. 2. It only needs to read the following passage, without any particular interpretation of it, to see how very doubtful it must be whether by the forty and two months, we are to understand the "thousand two hundred and threescore" prophetical "days" in verse 3, or

the three and a-half actual years in verse 9 ; and it is not unnatural to suppose that as the language of verse 2 applies equally well to the events of verse 3 and to the events of verses 7, 8, 9, the chronological period also may be intentionally expressed in a form admitting of a double solution.

We have the same words used in Rev. xiii. 5. And here it is manifestly doubtful whether the forty and two months are measured from the rising of the seven-headed beast from the sea, with the name of blasphemy on its heads, or from the healing of the wounded head. In the first case, it would correspond with the 1260 years; in the second case with the three years and a-half. And I believe the ambiguous phrase to be used on purpose to express both.

The momentous interest of this period of three years and a-half will appear in a subsequent chapter. I will only here observe, that if I am right in considering it as not only a detached period once mentioned, but as forming a second solution, both being equally correct and intended, of the three times and a-half of Daniel and the forty-two months of Revelation, it is not only the period of the death of the witnesses, but of the treading under foot, in some sense, of the holy city, of the deliverance of the saints into the hand of the beast, and of the short-lived triumph of the revived seventh or eighth head, and is, in the strongest sense, the time of the end. I do not deny the longer interpretation of both these doubtful phrases, a "time" and a "month;" but what I urge is this, that if only 1260 years were meant, it would have been most simply expressed, prophetically, as 1260 days; and that if only three years had been meant, it would have been expressed most simply as three days.

and a-half, and that its not being so expressed may fairly be interpreted as implying that it was left intentionally doubtful, in order to give to descriptions applying both to the longer and shorter periods a double chronological determination. In fact, it is a problem in which y must have two values because x has.

To avoid recurring to this subject, which could not be altogether passed by, but which has its dangers, I will just state the result of the preceding inquiry. No opinion has been expressed as to the commencement of Daniel's two thousand three hundred days, or their termination. It does not belong to the Gentile line of prophecy with which we are now concerned. Nor have the seven times of Nebuchadnezzar's insanity been taken into account, as the fact of their prefigurative meaning is, though probable enough, hardly certain. But there seems much in favour of the view that the latter half of them may coincide with the 1260 days. Of the remaining six periods, the 1290 days, commencing in the year 70, terminated in the year 1360 with John Wickliffe, and the 1335 days, having the same commencement, terminated with John Huss. The 1260 days of the witnesses' prophesying begin, with Faber, in 606,* or, with Hales, in 620, and ends either in 1866 or 1880, or perhaps at some epoch between the two. The three days and a-half of the death of the witnesses are

* Luther's opinion as to the commencement of the Papacy seems to coincide nearly with Faber's:—"Gregory the Great was the last bishop of the Roman Church. The rest are popes, that is, pontiffs, of the Roman court." He does actually date the rise of Popery A.D. 620; but he seems to have supposed that Gregory died in that year, whereas he really died in 604. *Lutheri Opera*, vol iv., 736. *Jena*, MDLVIII. See also page 746.

the last three years and a-half of the 1260, and must commence in 1862, if the 1260 are measured from the edict of Phocas, and in 1876 if they are measured from the Hejira. The three times and a-half and the forty and two months belong to both these periods, the expression being purposely used to suit alike the long tribulation of the Church and its final short suppression. What is to happen during the three days and a-half we have yet to consider. They are evidently days of extreme darkness, and three years and a-half before the termination of the 1260 years, whenever that may be, and on that point I am anxious to express no strong opinion, that night will commence. If Faber is right in fixing the termination of the 1260 years in 1866, we may expect almost immediately the final struggle. If Hales is right, that fearful conflict, of the nature of which more presently, may be further off. But the morning of earth's millennial glory cannot dawn till that night is passed, till the witnesses have been slain, till Satan has done his worst, and filled up the measure of his sins.*

To return from this chronological digression to the seven-headed beast, we must carefully observe the differences in its different appearances. In the 13th chapter of Revelation, where it is represented with its ten horns crowned, and in conflict with the saints, it is described as "like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion." In Daniel vii. these three beasts are used as symbols of the Greek, the Persian, and the Babylonian empires respectively. Here they are all united in the Roman beast, or fourth kingdom, which seems to imply

* For some observations on the chronological system of "Armageddon," see Appendix I.

that, at some time or other in its history, and probably under its last head, the Roman empire will include them all. It did before its dissolution into the ten kingdoms, cover portions of all the three. But the prophecy may require a still more complete fulfilment in a Roman empire more universal over the prophetic platform of the four monarchies than at any former period.

The most important part of the description of the fourth beast in Daniel remains to be examined: "I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots; and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things. I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool; his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. The judgment was set, and the books were opened. I beheld then, because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame."*

This little horn awakened Daniel's curiosity exceedingly, and he drew from his heavenly informant the following explanation:—

"The ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue these kings. And he shall speak great words against

* Dan. vii. 8—11.

the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.”*

The resemblance of this little horn to the Papacy is so complete as to leave nothing to be desired. The more it is considered, the more marvellous it appears. The time of its rise was to be that of the dissolution of the imperial power among the ten kingdoms—the fall of the western branch for a while. It is precisely analogous to St. Paul’s statement, in 2 Thess. ii., respecting the development of the man of sin: “Ye know what withholdeth, that he might be revealed in his season. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work, only he who now letteth will let until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that wicked be revealed.” The power of the sixth head was that which hindered the development of the apostasy. Till it had put forth its horns, and transferred much of its authority to them, the little horn could not rise. But as soon as that event had happened, not only did the little horn rise, but become the acting power of the beast and, while like a horn in one sense subordinate to the weakened head, in reality wielded all its powers, and spoke of itself, as if it were the head. This is well illustrated by the following passage from Dr. Newman’s “Essay on Development:” “An international bond and a common authority could not be consolidated, were it ever so certainly provided, while persecutions lasted. If the imperial power checked the development of councils, it availed also for keeping back the powers of the Papacy.”—“Ye know what withholdeth.” Dr. Newman, did you think of this passage when you wrote

* Dan. vii. 24, 25.

that? or had you forgotten it? There is a mystery either way which I cannot solve in a soul's history.—“The creed, the canon, the papacy, ecumenical councils, all began to form as soon as the empire relaxed its tyrannous oppression of the Church. And as it was natural that her monarchical power should rise when the empire became Christian, so it was natural, also, that further development of that power should take place when that empire fell.”*

The little horn rose after the other horns, and in the midst of them. We are not to suppose that these horns remain the same all through the period of the beast's existence. The striking fact is, that always the average number of European States has been ten, and we may perhaps number them as they were when they first arose. Four of them are probably mentioned in Revelation under the first four trumpets—the Goths, the Vandals, the Huns, and the Heruli. To these we must add the Lombard kingdom, the Exarchate of Ravenna, the State of Tuscany, Rome itself, the Franks, and, lastly, the Saxons. Three of these, the Lombards in part, and the Exarchate of Ravenna, and Rome itself, became the States of the Church. There is a certain amount of obscurity over this portion of history. But, as though to remove all doubt as to the interpretation, the Pope wears a triple crown, the emblem, as some say, of his dominion over heaven, and earth, and hell, but, much more probably, of the three sources of his temporal power; as in so many other instances, the Pope himself becoming the interpreter of prophecy.

The “eyes like the eyes of a man,” in the little horn, mark him out as an “overseer,” “episcopus,” or bishop,

* Newman's “Essay on Development,” pages 167, 168.

while of the “mouth speaking great things,” all history is full. It would be easy to multiply proofs of this, but let these suffice: “We declare, say, define, pronounce it to be necessary to salvation for every human creature to be subject to the Roman Pontiff.” Such is the decree of Pope Boniface VIII. in the canon law, and Sixtus V., in his bull against Henry, king of Navarre the Prince of Condé, is not less illustrative—“The authority given to St. Peter and his successors by the immense power of the Eternal King, excels all the powers of earthly kings and princes. It passeth uncontrolled sentence upon them all. And if we find any of them resisting God’s ordinance, it takes more severe vengeance on them, casting them from their thrones,” plucking up horns by their roots, “however powerful they may be, and tumbling them down to the lowest parts.” Such are some of the great words which the horn spake.

When we turn from Daniel to Revelation, and in the view there given to us of the beast look for the little horn, we cannot find it. In all three descriptions of the seven-headed beast, there are just ten horns, and no more. No little horn is recognized as springing up among them. Though we know from Daniel that it is on account of the great words of the little horn that the beast is to be destroyed and given to the burning flame, yet from first to last the seven-headed beast in Revelation has no little horn at all. The question is, what has become of it?

In the first exhibition of the seven-headed beast, in the twelfth chapter, the answer is easy. The beast, as there shown, is yet pagan. The little horn had not begun to rise—the Papacy did not exist.

But in the thirteenth chapter this explanation will not serve us. We naturally examine the context to see if we can find any reference to the little horn, and when we reach the eleventh verse, there it is : "And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon." A lamb's horn is a little horn, and the only physiological characteristics of this second beast are its horns and its voice. The beast may have been great or small, it is not said which ; but it had two little horns, and like the little horn in Daniel, "a mouth speaking great things"—"It spake as a dragon."

If this second beast had only one horn, we should at once identify this "little horn" with the little horn in the seventh chapter of Daniel, and consider it a placed on a distinct beast to express in a symbol what is there directly asserted, that he should be "diverse from his fellows," to mark the distinction between the ten horns of civil dominion and the little horn of ecclesiastical supremacy. But instead of one there are two of these horns, and as the number is emphatically stated, we cannot pass it over as of no importance. Every word tells in this wonderful book ; and here we have two little horns where we should only expect one.

Let us return back to the prophecy of Daniel. We have already examined the prediction in the seventh chapter of the fourth or Roman empire, with its ten divided kingdoms, and its little papal horn. But in the following chapter we have another series of predictions in which the same great monarchies, or two out of the four, are described as wild beasts, only of a different kind.

"In the third year of the reign of King Belshazzar a vision appeared unto me, even unto me Daniel, after

that which appeared unto me at the first. And I saw in a vision ; (and it came to pass, when I saw, that I was at Shushan in the palace, which is in the province of Elam;) and I saw in a vision, and I was by the river of Ulai. Then I lifted up mine eyes and saw, and, behold, there stood before the river a ram which had two horns, and the two horns were high, but one was higher than the other, and the higher came up last. I saw the ram pushing westward, and northward, and southward, so that no beasts might stand before him, neither was there any that could deliver out of his hand ; but he did according to his will and became great.

“ And as I was considering, behold an he-goat came from the west, on the face of the whole earth, and touched not the ground ; and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes. And he came to the ram that had two horns, which I had seen standing before the river, and ran unto him in the fury of his power. And I saw him come close unto the ram, and he was moved with choler against him, and smote the ram, and brake his two horns ; and there was no power in the ram to stand before him, but he cast him down to the ground, and stamped upon him, and there was none that could deliver the ram out of his hand.

“ Therefore the he-goat waxed very great ; and when he was strong, the great horn was broken, and for it came up four notable ones, toward the four winds of heaven.”*

In this vision the Persian empire is a ram, instead of a bear as in the preceding one, and the Grecian a he-goat instead of a leopard : “ The ram which thou sawest, having two horns, are the kings of Media and

* Daniel viii. 1—8.

Persia, and the rough goat is the king of Grecia, and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king.*

"The first king," that is, Alexander the Great, or perhaps, more strictly speaking, the dynasty of Philip and Alexander. In all these visions the body of the beast represents the great mass of the nations inhabiting that geographical locality, and the horns the kingdoms and their rulers.

Accordingly, the breaking of the great horn of the he-goat represented the termination of Alexander's Grecian empire by his sudden death, and the springing up of the four notable horns the division of the same territories among four of his generals, who became sovereigns of Syria, Egypt, Macedonia, and Thrace: "That being broken, whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his power."† Most of these kingdoms were absorbed into the Roman empire, and for this reason the he-goat itself does not appear in the prophecies in the Apocalypse. But instead of its separate appearance, the Grecian empire, under its other symbol of a leopard, is represented as forming a part of the seven-headed beast or Roman empire in that particular phase of its history described in the thirteenth chapter: "The beast which I saw was like unto a leopard."‡

In the latter time of these four kingdoms, that is, when the kingdoms founded by the successors of Alexander would be just on the point of vanishing away, out of one of them, corresponding with the little horn of ecclesiastical supremacy, or the ten-horned beast in the seventh chapter, there would arise another little horn,

* Dan. viii. 20, 21. † Dan. viii. 22. ‡ Rev. xiii. 2.

with very much the same characteristics. “ And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land.”*

The description of the little horn in the eighth chapter so closely resembles that of the little horn in the seventh chapter, that we cannot but look upon them as two powers of the same character. The one is plainly and confessedly the Papacy of the West, springing up among the nations of the western empire, and having its seat at Rome; how natural to suppose the other to be the apostate ecclesiastical power of the East springing up among the nations of the eastern empire, and having its seat in Constantinople, where is the patriarchal see of the Greek Church, and in the very region where formerly the Thracian horn of the he-goat had sway.†

An objection may be taken to this view, from the expressions used in the tenth and two following verses: “ It waxed great, even to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them. Yea, he magnified himself even to the princes of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down. And an host was given him against the daily sacrifice by reason of transgressions, and it cast down the truth to the ground and it practised and prospered.” Because it may be said that the Greek Church with the will, has not possessed the power, thus supposed, of triumphing over its enemies, and the

* Daniel viii. 9.

† The Patriarch of Constantinople is consecrated by the Bishop of Heraclea, the chief city of Thrace.—Neale’s “ History of the Eastern Church,” vol. i., p. 42.

temple at Jerusalem has not been in existence during its continuance. But it is an objection of no weight, for this part of the vision is expressly stated to refer to "the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full."* And when, in examining the Jewish line of prophecy, we find reason for believing that the temple will be again rebuilt, and yet, that then after it has been built, an enemy will once more be permitted for a short time to break in upon restored Judah, and that power, Gog, the prince of Rosh, Meshek, and Tubal (Russia, Muscovy, and Tobolsk, מֶשֶׁק וְתוֹבָל אַנְשֵׁי גּוֹג. Ezek. xxxviii. 2),† Emperor of all the Russias, and identified with the Eastern Church, these verses, instead of forming a difficulty in our interpretation, afford us one of those remarkable links between the two lines, in which we can look at the same event under its Gentile and its Jewish aspect.

The explanation given by Gabriel of this little horn, strongly confirms the view just taken of it : " In the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up. And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practise, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people. And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand, and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many; he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand."

* Daniel viii. 23.

† The translation given above is generally allowed to be cor-

We may notice these points of contrast between the two little horns. The Latin little horn had eyes like the eyes of a man, is characterized by the exaggeration of episcopacy into papal supremacy; the Greek little horn understands dark sentences, prides itself on its orthodoxy in difficult theological questions. The Latin little horn subdues kings by his own power; the Greek little horn is mighty, but not by his own power. He rests upon another. And while the Latin little horn seems to trust much to war, it is by peace the Greek little horn is to destroy many. Both are engaged in the same work, but in different ways, and the last will triumph most in the moment of peace.

The point we have reached is this. In Daniel we have ten horns, and two little horns growing out of the symbolical representations of the Roman and Greek empires,* twelve in all. In the thirteenth chapter of Revelation we have ten horns and two little horns, the same number. The distribution only is different. In Daniel the ten horns and one of the little horns are on the fourth beast, or Roman empire, and the other little horn on the third, or Grecian empire. In Revelation the ten horns are on the Roman empire, including the Grecian empire—the seven-headed beast, in shape like unto a leopard; and the two little horns on the single beast. What one of these little horns is with respect to the seven-headed beast in Daniel, the other little horn must be with respect to the he-goat in Daniel. The he-goat and the leopard in Daniel represent the same thing, the Grecian Empire, and are convertible symbols; therefore, the seven-headed beast like unto a leopard in

* The four horns of the he-goat may be considered as supplanted by the "little horn."

Revelation, includes, geographically, the seven-headed beast in Daniel and the he-goat; and the two horns of the second beast stand equally related to it—the one connected with its Latin portion, the other with its German portion. The first little horn is, confessedly, the Papacy in the West, therefore the second little horn must represent that which corresponds to it in the East. The number of horns being numerically the same, what is true in Daniel must be true in Revelation, and the second beast must be a symbol of the apostasies of the East and the West, united in a single body.

Similar reasoning applied to the 13th and 17th chapters of the Apocalypse, obliges us to identify what has generally been done, the beast with the two horns with the scarlet-coloured woman. If they are not identical, the woman is not represented in the visions of these visions, nor the two-horned beast in the second. And it will be observed, that in chapter xvii. the woman is seen in its last form under its eighth head. In the visions the deadly wound had been healed before she saw it, or, at all events, before he described it. The reason for the change of emblem seems to be to impress the connection of this great apostasy with Rome. The two-horned beast appears again at a still later period, under yet another emblem, as a false prophet working miracles; but in chapter xvii. the apostate is seen in the height of its glory, riding the beast of the apostate Church guiding and governing the apostate empire.

If it may be considered as proved, that we are taught to expect a re-union of the apostasies of the East and the West in one great confederacy for the suppression of the truth, it is worth inquiring whether

there have been any foreshadowings of such an event.

This was the purpose for which the council of Florence was held, A.D. 1439. It failed of its object, but the desire of the Popes to bring about such an union has never ceased. The present Pope, Pius IX., soon after his accession, made an effort with this view, but the two "little horns" both spake such "great words," that they only made each other angry.* This is now the avowed aim of a considerable party in our own Church. They wish to promote an union between the Latins and the Greeks for the suppression of Protestantism, and an eighth ecumenical council of the East and the West. Of this it would be easy to multiply proofs. Books and pamphlets of all kinds are published having this object in view. And, indeed, it is the only conceivable purpose of the laborious attempts to assimilate the services of the Church of England to that of Rome, and to revive, in so many ways, a love for everything that has a Romish or Greek air.

We must now examine the action of the ten-horned beast, and the two-horned beast. The ten-horned beast in that development which is described in the 13th chapter, has upon his heads "the name of blasphemy." But it is especially after the healing of his deadly wound that his mouth is said to speak great things and blasphemies. The phrase, "forty and two months" I have already observed to be an intentionally double one, expressing either a prophetical, or a natural three years and a-half; the 1260 days, or the three days and a-half. And, accordingly, we have two solutions of this part of the prophecy, each of which is a true one.

* Neale's "History of the Eastern Church," vol. ii., 1192.

"There was given unto him a mouth, speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months," is true of the whole duration of the Apostate empire. But it is more especially and signally of the last three days and a-half —three natural years and a-half—that the words are spoken. "I saw one of his heads wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed, and all the world wondered after the beast." We have seen that the healing of the deadly wound is the revival of the French Emperorship. The result of this is to be a world-wide astonishment and admiration. "And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast; and they worshipped the beast, saying, who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?" It appears, from a previous chapter, that the dragon is at once Satan and the Roman empire in its heathen form. To the Roman empire, manifestly animated by the prince of this world, succeeded another form of the Roman empire, not less really so, but differing from it in its blasphemous assumption of being the "holy Roman empire." On the rise of the ten-horned beast out of the sea, or the formation of the European commonwealth, under a nominally Christian, but really apostate imperial head, the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority. And, once more, when the deadly wound was healed, the dragon again "gave power unto the beast." An intimation, as I understand it, not only of the special agency of Satan in this renewal of the French Emperorship, but also of a renewed return on the part of the healed head to its source of strength, in its claim to be the successor of the Roman Emperors. I

think we may expect a more decided assumption of the Emperorship of the West than we have yet witnessed—a Papal coronation, the claim to the title of King of Rome for the heir apparent, or some striking attempt to mark the identity of the revived beast with the ancient dragon. It is not till then that the three years and a-half, the forty and two months, in their shorter signification, can commence. But when once that has taken place, and the eighth head of the beast has fully acquired the power and influence to be derived from being looked upon as the true successor of the dragon, or old Roman Empire, the rest of the prophecy will be on the eve of its fulfilment. “He opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.” This does not seem to mean that he will speak against God, his Church, and his saints avowedly, but really, by a false claim of having God, the Church, and the saints on his side. It may be otherwise, but such appears to me to be the signification of “blasphemy” in this passage. “And it was given him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them; and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” If the rest of the interpretation is correct, this is a fearful prospect. It teaches us to expect an universal dominion of the revived empire, and the prostration before it of all but the faithful servants of the Lamb.* The verses which

* There is a remarkable project attributed to Garibaldi, which bears very strikingly on the foregoing interpretation of the reunion of the states of Christendom under the eighth head of the beast.

conclude the passage are strange : “ If any man have an ear let him hear. He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity ; he that killeth with the sword shall be killed with the sword.” Is it a promise or a warning ? A promise of deliverance? or a warning to God’s persecuted people, like that of Jesus to Peter—“ Put up thy sword into the sheath, for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword ?” At all events, there will be abundant room for “ faith and patience.” “ Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.”

The Roman empire, while in the shape of the great red dragon, in its heathen form, was not always governed by one emperor. The empire was looked upon as strictly one, but there was an emperor of the East and an emperor of the West. It is quite possible that such may be the case under the revived eighth head. The fact of the union of the Latin and Greek little horns on the second or ecclesiastical beast, makes it, to say the least, not improbable that it may be so. It seems, indeed, necessary to adopt one of two alternatives, the submission of the East as well as the West to the French Emperor, or the revival of an eastern emperorship at Constantinople, in close combination with the western emperorship in possession of Rome.*

We will here pause to examine the general principle which regulates the different appearances of the ten-

The fact that such ideas should have suggested themselves to one so sincere in his love of freedom, and so much opposed hitherto to French ascendancy, make the document doubly striking as an illustration of prophecy. See Appendix II.

* Compare the secret treaties and discussions between the Emperor Alexander and the Emperor Napoleon I. at Tilsit, 1807. See Alison’s History, vol. vi., 299.

horned beast. The evident personal identity, if we may use such an expression, of the beast in its four descriptions in Revelation, in the twelfth chapter, the thirteenth chapter, the seventeenth chapter and the nineteenth chapter, has too often prevented commentators from inquiring into the reason of the differences. An able writer has pointed out that in the twelfth chapter the heads are crowned; in the thirteenth the horns are crowned; and in the seventeenth neither heads nor horns are crowned; by which he understands it to be intimated that in the first epoch the sovereign authority resided in the emperor, in the second in the European princes, in the third in the people. This appears to me an approximation to the truth, but not the exact truth.

We must look upon the successive appearances of the ten-horned beast as successive developments, or rather integuments covering the same animal. When Mr. Elliott speaks of the beast rising out of the sea, as the old red dragon with a new skin, he expresses in that particular exactly what I mean. The basis of the whole is the fourth beast, or Roman empire, of Daniel. This, in the thirteenth chapter of Revelation, is treated as a kind of incarnation of Satan, because viewed then and ever afterwards as the enemy and persecutor of God's saints. He continues throughout looked upon as inhabiting the old dragon of the Roman empire, as of old he dwelt in the serpent. It is not necessary to suppose that when the horns are crowned, as in the thirteenth chapter, the heads were not crowned. But the crowning of the horns was the new feature, which with some others distinguished the second appearance of the ten-horned beast. It was the period of the ten kingdoms. The heads might still be crowned. The central imperial

powers existed in name, but the horns were the real kings.

The third appearance in Revelation xvii. indicates a change likewise in the ruling authority, but of a very peculiar kind. There are still horns and heads, crowned it may be, but this is not mentioned. The prominent feature is a strange identity between the head and the body of the beast. It is stated that the beast is himself the head, and accordingly the names of blasphemy instead of being written on the head exclusively, are written all over it. Still there is a head. It is, as we have seen, the seventh head restored after having had the wound. And the question is how to interpret such a symbolical representation. The beast in the seventeenth chapter differs from that in the thirteenth, in being less general. It is the Roman empire at the moment of the eighth head's victory, and the head is said to be the body, because the eighth head avowedly rests on the sovereignty of the people. An emperor elected by universal suffrage seems to be the most exact fulfilment of that part of the description, that the beast himself is the eighth head—a democratic despotism.

There is a further distinction which we cannot well interpret till we have more fully discussed the two horned beast. The great red dragon is alone; the beast from the sea is accompanied by another beast having two horns; the scarlet-coloured beast is ridden by a woman called Babylon the Great; and the beast in his last phase, just before his ultimate destruction, has him the false prophet. The meaning of which I believe to be this: The Pagan empire had of course no Church; apostasy had not then commenced. During the greater part of the twelve hundred and sixty years

the European confederacy, the two horns of the eastern and western apostasies have been preparing to combine, and in the last three years and a-half actually will be combined as one ecclesiastical system. Just at the close of this period, the western apostasy, the stronger of the two little horns, but uniting the other with her, rides in undisputed authority on the universal empire, till under a sudden revolution burnt, that is destroyed, by the agency of the ten horns.* The apostate system still remains, but the Eastern Emperor has now become sole head, and the eastern horn, or false prophet, acts in subservience to him, instead of riding the beast like the woman. Then comes the war with the Lamb, described in Rev. xix., which I believe to be the same as Gog's invasion of Israel in Ezekiel. And the final blow is inflicted at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.

We must now return to the thirteenth chapter, and examine more minutely the doings of the two-horned beast, or apostate Church.

* Unless—which I suggest as an alternative solution—the burning of the harlot means the destruction of the city of Rome simply. I think it possible that this may take place before the Eastern Emperor, or Gog, rises into sole ascendancy.

CHAPTER IX.

THE APOSTATE CHURCH.

THE nature of this symbol has already come before us, as compounded of the two little horns in the seventh and eighth chapters of Daniel. It is this circumstance which has given rise in part to the variety of interpretation. Sir Isaac Newton considered it to be the Greek Church; Mr. Faber, following in this most of the best commentators, the Latin Church; and Mr. Elliott the clergy of the Latin Church. In the view here taken of it, it is yet future, because the Greek and Latin apostasies are represented as united on one body. But it is natural, under these circumstances, that we should find the characteristics of each apostasy, or little horn, more or less prominent in it, and that what is to be exhibited fully when they are united, should be true of them in part while separate. It is, therefore, so far a strong evidence in favour of the interpretation here proposed, that commentators should have been able to see, some the Greek and others the Latin Church in the symbol. Each is right, for both are there.

“ I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth.” There is an evident contrast between the earth out of which the second beast is said to rise, and the sea out of which the first beast appeared to rise. In order to understand this, we must remember that the moment at

which St. John saw the beast rise up out of the sea, was subsequent to its having received on its heads the names of blasphemy. It was no longer the heathen empire, but the apostate empire when St. John saw it rise ; and being, as it is, identical in personality though not in time, with the great red dragon, it is implied that the great red dragon being submerged in the sea, came up again out of the waters with the names of blasphemy on its heads. In other words, the Roman empire, on its coming into fresh notice, after being almost buried in the Gothic invasions, rose as from a sea of nations, out of the tumultuous agitations in which the European commonwealth was gradually formed. On the other hand, the two-horned beast is said to rise out of the earth ; that is, out of an apparently settled and peaceful state of things. It springs up in the midst of the Roman earth, while the empire is at peace. " And he had two horns like a lamb." The meaning of this we have already seen. Each horn is ecclesiastical, and therefore lamb-like. But " he spake as a dragon," in this respect corresponding with what is said of the Latin little horn, whose " great words" are mentioned by Daniel, and implied of the Greek little horn, though in a more moderate degree. Both united will speak as a dragon.

" And he exerciseth all the powers of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth, and them which dwell therein, to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed." This part of the description more resembles Daniel's Greek little horn, than that of his Latin little horn. The sort of connection with the imperial beast, is one of more apparent subservience than we should have gathered from the seventh of Daniel, but agrees strikingly with that in the eighth. " His power

shall be mighty, but not by his own power." And it has often been objected to the more usual view that the Popes were anything but inclined to make men worship the empire, while the Greek clergy are one great instrument of Russian despotism, and do lead the people to pay little short of divine honours to the Czar. It would seem, then, that the united apostasy will, in some points, be in a position, with respect to the revived Roman empire, more resembling that of the Greek Church than that of the Latin—a position not inaptly marked by Napoleon I., when he compelled the Pope to assist at his coronation, but placed the crown on his own head. And yet, in another respect, the Latin element prevails; for the expression, "he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him," implies that, though apparently inferior, the second beast is the real actor in the whole matter, and, while seeming to work in subordination to the first beast, does really control it.

"And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth, in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast." It was this characteristic which led Sir Isaac Newton especially to fix upon the Greek Church as the second beast. The fraud of the Greek fire at Jerusalem is well known, an account of it being given in almost every book of travels to the East, and the whole artifice is so clumsy, that one is at a loss to conceive the state of mind of those deluded by it, yet that such is the case with multitudes appears to admit of no doubt. They do really believe that the clergy of the Greek Church have power to bring down fire from heaven.

There are points which, in an union of the East and West, could never be given up. The West could not give up the Papacy, and the East could not give up the Greek fire. But it is quite a possible supposition that this deception might be handled better by Satan himself. What has been done by the Greeks alone naturally, may be done by this Catholic apostasy of Greeks and Latins supernaturally, in which case the miracle would be a very strong seduction for many. And "miracles" are expressly ascribed to this second beast. This is in exact harmony with what we are led to expect from other parts of Scripture. Our Lord himself foretold that "false Christs and false prophets shall arise, and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if it were possible, even the elect." And in Paul's description of the man of sin, much emphasis is laid on this point. His "coming is after the working of Satan with all power, and signs, and lying wonders." Now, it must be admitted, that both in the East and the West there have been plenty of lying wonders, and also that by some of them some of the elect (St. Augustine, for instance) have been deceived. But almost all these lying wonders, or all of them, have hitherto been feats of human jugglery, and perhaps hardly come up to the strong expressions used respecting them. The passage now before us seems to teach us that the consummation of this, as of every other evil, is to be under the eighth head of the beast, the special work of the two-horned beast, the united apostasy of the East and the West, to which "power" is granted to "do them."

How great a trial to the faith of even real Christians, miracles so worked would be, it is not difficult to imagine. It would require a strong grasp of truth to

hold it when the opposing lie was maintained by miracles, and it may be that this very prediction is given us beforehand for the express purpose of fortifying us against the temptation. The power of this device has been already in part tested. It was by means of false miracles that the worship of saints was introduced, and transubstantiation, at a later period, defended. And if the view here taken be a correct one, and the united apostasy, attractive enough on other grounds to many, is to have the power of working miracles, it will need all grace to prevent even the elect from being deceived.

The precise object for which these miracles will be worked, is stated in the following clause: "Saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast which had the wound by a sword, and did live."

This "image of the beast" is rightly interpreted by Elliott to mean a general council. It seems the most exact symbol that could possibly be given of such an assembly, which is, or assumes to be, a representative body. But it is evident that, according to my view of the meaning of the passage, this image, instead of being, as he considers, a council past, must be a council future.

Up to this time there have been seven general councils, recognized as such both by the East and the West. These are the following: First Council of Nice, A.D. 325; First Council of Constantinople, A.D. 381; the Council of Ephesus, A.D. 431; the Council of Chalcedon, A.D. 451; Second Council of Constantinople, A.D. 553; Third Council of Constantinople, A.D. 680; Second Council of Nice, A.D. 787. There are other general councils, so considered by the West and the

East, separately, but these seven are acknowledged as such by both.

It has often been a great object with the Church of Rome to persuade the Greeks to unite in a general council under Papal supremacy. The most celebrated attempt of this kind was made at the Council of Florence, A.D. 1439. That council, in which two doctrines of the Romish Church, that of transubstantiation, and that of priestly intention in the administration of the sacrament, were for the first time definitely pronounced, was actually attended by the Primate of the Russian Church, and a reconciliation was made between the East and the West. But the Eastern bishops who had attended the council found themselves, on returning to their dioceses, unable to control the strong feeling which then existed against the union, and were compelled to abandon it. Yet the thought has never been relinquished by the Roman Pontiffs. Gregory XVI. wrote about it. Pius IX. is reported to be no less anxious on the subject, and it is the favourite scheme of the Romanizing party in our own Church to overwhelm Protestantism by an ecumenical council of the East and the West combined, a representation of Christendom, an "image of the beast."

The expression used respecting the beast "which had the wound with a sword and did live," defines the period of this council. If the view of the heads of the beast already taken is correct, this council cannot be one past. The seventh head was wounded in 1815, and it must be a council yet to be summoned.

This also may be shown by another consideration. The seven-headed beast has the prophetic symbols of all four empires upon it. Its basis is the fourth king-

dom, but it is like unto a leopard, the symbol of the Grecian empire; his feet are as the feet of a bear, the symbol of the Persian empire; and his mouth as that of a lion, the symbol of the Babylonian empire.* Then it is not only true that the seven-headed beast itself must, at some time or other of its existence, embrace the whole, or a part of each of the great empires, but it is also true that the image of the beast must be a representation of them all. A council from which the bishops of the Greek Church are excluded, is not an image of the beast like unto a leopard. This excludes the Council of Lateran and the council of Trent from any claim to be considered as the image of the beast. Since the second Council of Nice, no attempt has been made to construct a perfect image, except at the Council of Florence, which failed; and on this ground, as well as the other, in order to the fulfilment of the prediction, we must look forward to an eighth ecumenical council of apostate Christendom.

This is the avowed desire of the Romanizing party in our own Church. Mr. Palmer, who has since become a Romanist, expressed himself thus:—"Every well-informed Christian will reply that what men most look forward to and desire, and move one another to desire and prepare for, is an ecumenical council. Difficult and almost impossible as the undertaking to unite the churches so long divided may seem, there are circumstances which seem to promise that a time is approaching when a council, if convoked, may more easily meet, and may deliberate with more independence and liberty than before."†

* Dan. vii.

† Palmer's "Dissertation on the Holy Orthodox Communion," page 230.

And every reflecting mind will observe, in the general tone of thought, a yearning after synodical action, which, if allowed to expand, would issue in a general council.

The deeds of this general council are more fully stated elsewhere, as we shall see presently; but in this passage two prominent points are mentioned:—“And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.” In other words, the united apostasies shall utter, through this general council, persecuting decrees. Reception of the council will be made imperative, and all who will not submit to it will be condemned to death by its canons.

There is a second point:—“And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their forehead, and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.” What this mark is I cannot even conjecture; but it appears to be some distinguishing test by which the members of the apostasy will be shown. Some test would certainly be imposed by such a council, and almost any test would be fitly symbolized by the mark on the forehead and in the hand. The expression that “no man might buy or sell,” may indicate an act of excommunication, involving those consequences literally or ecclesiastically, or both conjointly; the event will show. Having the mark, having the name of the beast, and having the number of his name, appear to be distinct things—three tests which will secure those who

possess any one of them from persecution ; but I cannot profess to explain the difference.

Volumes have been written on the number of the beast ; but the simple explanation of Irenæus still commends itself as the only real one, *Λατεῖος*, the Latin. If it had been the name of the second beast, it would have been a difficulty ; but the seven-headed beast is always the Roman empire, and whether at Constantinople or at Rome, always, at bottom, Latin.

We gather, then, from the symbol of the two-horned beast, that after the revival of the Roman empire in the Napoleonic dynasty, and probably under two emperors, one of Rome, and the other of Constantinople, as proposed by the Emperor Alexander at Tilsit, the two hitherto separate apostasies of the East and the West will combine into one, and while, in accordance with its Latin element, wielding in reality the power of the state, will so far follow the Greek precedent as to be in appearance subservient to it, claiming for Cæsar more than his due, and giving to the head of the beast that worship which belongs to Christ as Prince of the kings of the earth.

The united apostasy will make a general council, and claim worship for that ; a fact which, in itself, rather implies a diminution of the personal authority of the Pope. The Pope is represented by the head of the two-horned beast ; but except as having two horns, and speaking like a dragon, this head is not especially noticed. The body of the two-horned beast is all-important, and important chiefly in forming that image which seems to speak to more purpose than the two-horned beast which forms it. The council will rule *the Church*, while the emperor rules the State.

This united apostasy will use Satanic miracles in gathering the council, and especially give an importance and reality, which it has never hitherto possessed, to the Greek claim of bringing down fire from heaven—an indication, perhaps, of the place of meeting. And then will follow the last fearful conflict of the Church, when those who will not worship the beast or his image will be called on to suffer death itself for their Lord's sake.

Before passing on, it may be well to throw out one suggestion. There may be a reason why in this last conflict the Papal power appears to be, in some way, subordinated to the Imperial. It is just on the eve of Christ's reign, and it seems becoming that the apostate king should be more prominent than the apostate priest. Nor does it seem to me improbable that what is dimly shadowed out in Russia, may be exhibited fully in the revived empire, and the emperor or emperors be adored as in Christ's place, in an anticipated millenium. It is even possible, though I do not think it predicted, that the Papal crown may rest on an imperial brow, apostate priest and apostate king at once. In the next chapter we will consider more at length the final tribulation of the Church.

CHAPTER X.

THE LAST TRIBULATION OF THE CHURCH.

OF this final tribulation of the Church, I believe that two other views are given—one in the course of the trumpet prophecies, and the other in chapter xiv.

In the interpretation of the seals, I have little to do but to follow the guidance of Mr. Elliott. It appears to me, that the light thrown by the “*Horæ Apocalypticæ*” on this portion of the prophecy is absolutely marvellous, and I must refer my readers to it for further details, only touching most lightly on the outline, though without professing to tread exactly in the footprints of my guide.

When the first seal was opened, John says, “I saw, and behold, a white horse.” This horse appears during four of the seals, and is the appropriate symbol of the undivided Roman Empire;—white in the first seal, during the prosperous reigns immediately succeeding the death of the Apocalyptic seer, those of Nerva and Trajan and Adrian and the Antonines; red in the period next following, in which the prefects of the praetorian guards guided the Roman State, making and unmaking emperors amidst civil war and bloodshed; black in that dark period of fiscal oppression, marked by Caracalla’s edict, when the praetors of the provinces exhausted them for their own private gains,

till they drew forth the indignation of the Emperor Severus, whose voice of justice vainly sought to recall them to a feeling of justice; and pale or death-like during fifty years, marked by Gibbon as one of the most disastrous periods of human history.

The rider on the first horse was indicated by his Cretan origin, carrying a bow, the armorial ensign of that island—Nerva was a Cretan, and the four succeeding emperors all by Roman law belonged to his family by adoption—by his office wearing the *στρεφανός* or chaplet, which we always see on the coins of the early Roman emperors—and by his success “he went forth conquering and to conquer.” It was the prosperous period of the Roman empire.

The rider of the second horse is also marked by his office. He wears no crown, but carries a sword, the recognized badge of authority of the praetorian prefects. Only that whereas their lawful ensign was a short sword, the rider in the vision had a great one, to show that he rode the Roman horse in the exercise of an exaggerated authority, which did not properly belong to him. He is still further identified by his actions: “Power was given to him to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another.” It was the period of civil war and bloodshed.

The rider of the third horse has also his appropriate heraldic device, a pair of balances, yet to be seen on the coins of the praetors of the provinces. It indicated the justice with which they ought to have governed, while the black colour of the horse told of their cruel oppression, which resulted in want and famine, notwithstanding the voice from heaven, echoed from the imperial seat, commanding fair prices and honest deal-

ing: "A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny, and see thou commit not injustice* respecting the oil and the wine."

The fourth beast had no human rider. The Roman empire seemed hastening to dissolution. All authority was relaxed, and there was no one to guide the State. But Death seemed the ruler, and Hell followed with him, and the unhappy empire was devastated by the sword, and famine, and pestilence, and wild beasts. And so the scene changes.

That which discloses itself on the opening of the fifth seal, is both retrospective and prospective: "I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held." No horse is seen. The Roman empire has two emperors, and this change is marked by the dropping that symbol, and the age, emphatically that of martyrs, followed. The most severe persecution was that of Diocletian immediately before the subversion of Paganism by Constantine. Martyrs had been slain before; but the most appropriate time for John's beholding the vision is one which still retains the name of "the era of martyrs."

The vision is prospective also: "They cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them, and it was said unto them that they should rest for a little season, until their fellow-servants also, and their brethren that should be killed, even as they were, should be fulfilled." The "white robes" refer to earth rather than to heaven. They mark the

* μὴ αδικήσης.

way in which the memory of those blessed martyrs of Jesus, who were slain under the Pagan emperors, has been held in honour. Their names have been revered ever since, and in man's eye, as well as in God's eye, they have seemed always clothed in white. But a second series of martyrdoms is predicted, which must be that of those who, under Papal persecutions, have laid down their lives for the testimony of Jesus. These last are not spoken of as receiving the white robes; their judgment is with their God. A few, indeed, whose names are household words amongst us, are very dear to all God's people; but the great mass of Protestant martyrs are not honoured by the world. Unknown, or blackened by Romish calumnies, the time has not even yet come for men to see them clothed in white.

The prediction respecting these Protestant martyrs is given in answer to the question, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" And the whole force of the reply depends on the word "until." It is quite true that, grammatically, this word does not imply necessarily anything respecting what comes after it. But it is not here a point of grammar. The question is, "How long?" and the answer is "Until." Either no answer is given to the question, or the answer is, that the time will come when that foretold has been fulfilled. No verbal criticism can overturn this obvious common-sense view of the passage; which does not rest at all upon the specific use of the word "until," but on what must of necessity be the meaning which in the context it would convey to the mind. And, therefore, while agreeing with Elliott, that the series of Protestant martyrdoms is plainly intended by

the fellow-servant and brethren of the saints under the altar, I must further believe that the series is not yet closed, since the time has not yet come for the Lord to avenge the blood of his saints.

The opening of the sixth seal is followed by a vision which John saw, in which there was every appearance of a mighty convulsion of nature, giving rise among earth's inhabitants to an apprehension that the day of judgment had arrived. It is God's judgment on Paganism. The revolution under Constantine struck terror into the minds of his Pagan contemporaries. There was a consciousness on their minds that the God of the Christians was fighting against them. It must be carefully observed that the description of this scene is not in the future, but in the past. It is what John saw, not what he predicted. It is a symbol, and there has been no greater or more world-wide event than this. No language could be too strong to express the feelings about it, of those who lived in the age of Constantine. And we have but to put ourselves in their place to understand aright the sixth seal.

But the sixth seal is not all occupied with this subject. It contains, besides, the sealing vision and the palm-bearing vision.

The two together describe the gathering of God's Church, their present separation from the world by being sealed in their foreheads, and their future blessedness when their number is completed.

The principle of allusive reference, so well explained by Mr. Elliott, enables us to interpret this vision most satisfactorily. The time of Constantine was full of real danger. The Roman empire became nominally

Christian, and there was the most imminent danger of the distinction being lost between the Church and the world. The outward sealing of baptism ceased to be in any way distinctive. Then was the time for Christ himself, as the angel of the covenant, to take the matter into his own hands. For this purpose, the storm of Divine wrath about to descend on the Roman world, in the shape of the Gothic invasions, was held back for a time, while Christ sealed his own people. Elliott seems to me to attach an under importance to the personal ministry of St. Augustine in this matter. But it cannot be doubted that among the Christians of the fourth and fifth centuries, there were many who in secret, like those mentioned in Ezekiel, mourned and sighed for prevailing ungodliness. The rising corruptions did meet with very strenuous opposition. The fact we know; but of the individuals we know little. The men whose names have descended to us, like Ambrose and Gregory Thaumaturgus, were the patrons of superstition. Even Augustine was too much carried away by reverence for Ambrose, as appears by his reference in his "Confessions" to the scenes enacted at the discovery of the bones of supposed martyrs, beneath the church at Milan. The men who resisted error were unknown, and their names are unrecorded, for the most part, except in the chronicles of heaven. But then it was that those bodies of Christians began to be formed, which afterwards, in the East and the West, under the names of Paulicians, Albigenses, Waldenses, and other appellations, lived in deserts and mountains, and dens and caves of the earth, sealed with Christ's seal, and bearing Christ's reproach.

The outward Church, verging towards apostasy,

was beginning to claim to itself the title of Israel. It appropriated the prophecies of the Old Testament, which belong in the letter to the descendants of Jacob and by analogy to them who by faith are Abraham's children, to itself. And it is in allusion to this that, in the sealing vision, we are taught that all are not Israel, that are of Israel. If the outward body of professing Christians called themselves Israel, Christ would seal a certain number out of them, who were really his. It was not true that all were his who had been baptized, who were called Christians. No; there was still an election of grace. And as the danger was great, when Christianity became the religion of the empire, of the Church being lost in the world, it was necessary to guard against this danger. And Christ began to separate his own, and to mark them as being such.

These in every age are the 144,000. They appear again and again in this Book of Revelation. God's faithful ones—his true people—the Israel of God—the children of Abraham by faith—the heirs of the promises. There is nothing so important as to be among them. And no man should ever rest until sure that he has the seal of the living God imprinted on his forehead.

And then St. John saw yet further. The whole gathered Church reposing in glory formed the fitting sequel to their sealing upon earth: "After this, I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands, and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God,

who sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." It was an anticipative glance into eternal glory. But not in the least disconnected with what precedes. The gathering of the Church in glory is the result of its sealing now in tribulation. The angel informed John, "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Had not St. John seen this last part of the vision, the subject of the separation of the true Church from the nominal Church would have been left incomplete. As it is, we trace the line of light, till it loses itself in eternal blessedness.

This is no real interruption to the chronological arrangement of the prophecy. The principle on which it is not so is one of extreme importance to the interpretation of the book. And it is no peculiarity of the sixth seal, and no exceptional case, but depends on a law rendered necessary by the nature of history itself.

Events in history can never be separated into what natural philosophers call a pure spectrum, except by an artificial arrangement. Naturally, they always overlap like the colours in the rainbow. For which reason it is impossible to write any history, preserving at once the sequence of events and the order of time. The most accurate chronological arrangement is one in which all the commencements of connected series of events are placed chronologically. In this case, their endings will certainly not be in the order of time. One will end before the next to it begins. Another will end while the next to it is midway in its course. Another will end after the next to it has ended, and include it altogether in its course. History cannot be written

otherwise, unless it degenerates into annals, and neglects altogether the natural connection of facts.

It is the same with prophecy for the same reason. The seven seals, and the seven trumpets, are arranged in chronological order; that is, their commencements are. And each seal, and trumpet, manifestly describes a distinct succession of events connected among themselves. Then, unless the history described in them is unlike all other history, ancient or modern—unless it is the history of some other planet, or some future age, we may be quite sure of this, that since the commencements are in chronological order, the conclusions are not so. The fact appears, on examining what has preceded. The beginning of the second seal does follow the ending of the first seal, for the prætorian prefects did not commence their sway till the prosperous period of Nerva and his four successors had passed away. But fiscal oppression under the prætors of the provinces, the subject of the third seal, commenced long before the conflicts with the prætorian guards ended. The second seal overlapped the third, and both overlapped the fourth. The fifth seal reaches down through the sixth and part of the seventh, to the Protestant martyrs. And for the same reason, in accordance with the same principle, the sixth seal, overlapped in its first part by the fifth, in its turn overlaps the seventh, and reaches beyond it into the glories of the eternal state. I conceive that a firm grasp of this necessity of arrangement, springing out of the complications of human affairs, is essential to a right understanding of the Apocalypse. Simple as the principle is, that if the commencements of the seals and trumpets are in chronological order, their endings

cannot be, it has been often overlooked, and for want of it, difficulties raised where none exist.

Before we leave the sixth seal, let us pause for a moment on the expression so emphatic in the original: "These are they which came out of great tribulation." "ἐκ τῆς θλίψεως τῆς μεγάλης," "out of the tribulation that great one." What is exactly intended by this description? It appears to mean the tribulation of the Church, commencing with the rise of apostasy, and reaching down to the consummation. It corresponds with the 11th verse of the previous chapter.

Then John saw the first series of martyrs, those under the Pagan emperors, clothed in white robes, and heard of a future series of martyrs, the Protestant martyrs, respecting whose white robes nothing is there said. The time for their wearing white robes would not come so soon. But come it would at last. And here, under the sixth seal, they are seen wearing them; not the martyrs only, but all who during the Church's tribulation, a period which will not end till Christ comes, shall have "washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." How blessed an anticipation! Each believer has his tribulation. In Christ's eye it seems, no doubt, to form a part of the great tribulation of the Church. All this is coming to an end. There is awaiting us a rest after conflict, of which we can now form no conception. And if a time is at hand when the great tribulation will culminate in a short but terrible persecution, these very words we are now considering may prove in those troublous days the mainstay of an afflicted Church. "These are they which came out of the tribulation—that great one—and

have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple, and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither shall they thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

The seventh seal includes the seven trumpets. There is so manifest an incongruity in supposing it to consist of half an hour's silence, that no other interpretation is open to us. And its commencement evidently coincides with the loosing of the winds, which the four angels were commanded to hold in the sixth seal. The hour had arrived for God's judgments to begin to be poured out on apostatizing Christendom; and the seven angels, with seven trumpets, stood prepared to blow.

Previous to the first trumpet-blast, "another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense which came with the prayers of the saints ascended up before God out of the angel's hand. And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth, and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake." By this other angel, Elliott understands the Angel of the covenant appearing here in allusive reference to the doctrine of the intercession of saints then beginning to prevail in the Church.

Instead of many intercessors, St. John saw one, out of whose hand, and perfumed by whose incense, all the prayers of all saints ascended before God. Christ in fact in the symbol assumes that office, which in the time of Augustine men were beginning to divide between him and others.

And now the time had arrived for judgment to fall on the Roman world. The interpretation of the symbols of the first five trumpets, and the greater part of the sixth, has been given so fully by Bishop Newton, Keith, Elliott, and others,* as to leave nothing to be desired in the way of explanation or illustration. The most ingenious objection which I have seen raised against it, is that it makes out of the Book of Revelation a *memoria technica* of history—a very fatal objection in the eyes of those whose minds are filled with the German horror of special prophecy, and who love to wrap up the whole in a mist; but a very satisfying proof of the correctness of the interpretation to those who believe that the God of prophecy is also the God of history.

I can but briefly glance at the main features of each trumpet.

For some considerable time the population of the Roman frontiers heard with dismay of the hordes of barbarians pressing upon them from the East. The frontiers of China and Tartary seem to have been the sources of those waves of wild nations which rolled in succession westward, and at last broke on the civilized but enervated Roman empire. These Gothic invasions, which changed the whole face of Europe, are exhibited in the visions as successive blasts of angel trumpets.

* For the fifth and beginning of the sixth trumpet I prefer the commentary in "Armageddon," but not for the first four.

This period in earth's history is marked on the image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream as that of the formation of the ten toes mixed of iron and clay, the rise of the present European commonwealth. To the inhabitants of the Roman world it was a season of much suffering, but perhaps, on the whole, to mankind rather of gain than of loss. And with that discriminating accuracy so remarkable in the Apocalypse, these trumpets are not, like the later ones, spoken of as woes. Their ultimate effect was beneficial, grievous as was the immediate result, and ingrafted on the effete civilization of the old Romans the healthier moral tone and stronger physical powers of the Gothic nations. In this respect they form a striking contrast with the Saracenic and Turkish woes contained under the fifth and sixth trumpets. These were simple and unmitigated scourges. Neither Saracen nor Turk has imparted a single benefit to the lands they ravaged. Such is the testimony of all history. And in this simple distinction drawn in the Apocalypse between the Gothic invasion and the Mahometan invasion, that the latter, as contrasted with the former, were woes, we have, in fact, the most important point in the philosophy of the history of the two periods.

"The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth, and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up."* Alaric was the first to fulfil a long expectation, and introduced the barbarous tribes long hovering round its frontiers into the heart of the Roman world. In the depth of winter, taking advantage of an unusually hard frost, he crossed the

* Rev. viii. 7.

Danube with an army of Goths. For the details of his march, and the capture and sack of Rome, Gibbon is the great authority. Keith and Elliott have made most ample use of his vivid historical pictures to show the inimitable perfection of the hieroglyphic symbols before us. The quarter from which the invasion proceeded, the North, indicated by the hail—the character of the invasion shown by the fire and blood—and the track of the invading host visible to John's eye in burning trees and grass, all complete this little image of Alaric the Goth and his armies, when Rome, imperial Rome, first, since the days of the Gauls, fell into the hands of a foreign foe.

"And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea; and the third part of the sea became blood; and the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed."

The commencement of this trumpet sounding is in chronological succession to that of the last. In the year 395 Alaric crossed the Danube. In 429 Genseric commenced his wars on the Roman earth. It was especially against the third part, or African provinces, that his enterprise was directed, the whole Roman empire being at that time considered as consisting of the empire of the West, the empire of the East, and the African provinces.* Genseric invaded Africa, and then, like a burning mountain from that tropical continent, threw himself on the sea, and annihilated a large portion, called here "a third," of the Roman navy and mer-

* I am not quite sure to whom I owe this division. Elliott's is somewhat different, and perhaps more exact, but the above is sufficient.

chant-vessels. The whole of this trumpet is included within the first. Genseric died while Alaric was still in power. Nor is this any objection to the interpretation. The two series of events are perfectly distinct, and the first did overlap the second. And however described, whether in plain words or in symbol, these facts about them must appear.

"And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters." Attila and the Huns were the next scourge to fall upon the Roman world. The geographical scene of his conquests is no less plainly marked than that of Alaric and of Genseric. Keith, in his "Signs of the Times," gives a map of North Italy with only the rivers and streams marked upon it. It is emphatically the place of rivers and fountains of water, and it was there that the fiery Attila fell like a burning star, burnt and expired. But he left behind him results fraught with evil to Rome. "The name of the star is called Wormwood; and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter." We cannot stay now to trace the events in North Italy which followed its invasion by Attila, and paved the way for the temporary extinction of the Western empire. Disaffection followed on defeat, and what Attila left behind him after his death was even more fatal than his victories in life.

"And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise."

The first King of Rome was Romulus, and the first Emperor Augustus. Romulus Augustulus was the name of the feeble prince from whose hands the imperial sceptre dropped. The Western Roman empire, or “third part”—the Roman empire being then looked on as tripartite, including the empire of the east, that of the west, and Africa—the western third part was for a while extinguished. Its imperial sun and its lesser dignities were put out, and a Gothic kingdom took its place. The first four trumpets completed the destruction of the western third part, but left the east wholly untouched. The eastern empire was flourishing, while the western was drowned in these successive tides of barbaric invasion.

But further trumpets were to sound. Their blasts were to be prolonged through much longer periods, and in each was to be included a special woe. “I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels which are yet to sound!”

“The fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth, and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit.” The almost universal agreement among historical commentators as to the application of this and the following trumpet to the Saracens and Turks, has made the interpretation of the symbols familiar to most readers. I can but slightly touch on them.

The Mahometan imposture was the direct work of Satan. To him, the “star fallen from heaven unto the earth,” Lucifer, Abaddon, or Apollyon, it was given to open “that bottomless pit of dark and soul-destroying

delusions."* His was the key by which this was done. The Koran continually speaks of the key of God, which opened to them the gates of the world and of religion. So in the Koran, "did not God give to his legate the power of heaven which is above, and fire which is beneath? With the key did he not give him the title and power of a porter, that he may open to those whom he shall have chosen?"† From the cave of Hera, near Mecca, where, in the words of Gibbon, he "consulted the spirit of fraud or of enthusiasm, whose abode is not in the heavens," Mahomet came forth as the scourge of apostate Christendom. The Saracens or Hagarenes, as they are called in the Psalms, were inhabitants of Arabia, the land of the locust, and "as if in identification of themselves with the symbols, the Arabs call them 'soldiers' horses.' "‡ Their turbans are styled "diadems" by the Arabian writers, and spoken of as a special gift from God. They wore long black hair like the hair of women, and yet were fierce as lions, and clad in cuirasses, "breast-plates of iron." The strength of their army was in their cavalry, which is represented by saying of the locusts which prefigured them, that "the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle." Unlike the natural locusts, "it was commanded them" by Abubeker, who first led them to foreign conquest, "that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing;

* "Armageddon," vol. i. p. 404.

† "Essais sur l'Espagne," by M. Peyron, quoted by Elliott, "Horse Apocalypticæ," vol. i. p. 278, first edition, where he gives an engraving of the Gate of Justice, in the Alhambra, with a key sculptured on it.

‡ "Armageddon," vol. i. p. 406.

neither any tree," but kill the men only, and especially the priests; for, as God's scourge, they were executing God's vengeance against apostate Christendom. They were to hurt "only those men who have not the seal of God in their foreheads." The "five months" during which the locusts were to torment men, measured prophetically, are 150 years, and if we understand the hurting men to be put in contrast with the tormenting men, and not identified with it, it will give us a period of 300 years for the Saracenic woe, in the first half of which, under the undivided caliphate, men were tormented by their conquests; and in the second half, under the divided caliphate of the Omnidæs and Abassides, men were hurt by their plundering aggressions.* And so at last, in 932, "Mactador, the last caliph of any eminence, was slain in civil warfare under the walls of Bagdad,"† just 300 years from the succession of Abu-beker, at whose summons the Saracens had commenced their career of foreign conquest by the invasion of Syria, and four years later, in the year 936, "the Arabs, three hundred and four years after the death of Mahomet, were deprived of the sceptre of the East."‡

The sixth angel sounded, and another woe fell on apostate Christendom. "I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God." Various reasons have been given for the place from which this voice is said to have issued. It appears to me to have proceeded from the "saints under the altar," the same white-robed martyrs mentioned in the fifth seal, and to

* See, for two slightly different views of this date, "Armageddon" and "Horæ Apocalypticæ."

† Birks, quoted in "Armageddon," vol. i. p. 415.

‡ Gibbon, quoted in "Armageddon," vol. i. p. 415.

indicate that the persecution of God's saints—the Paulicians, for instance, some of whom were burnt alive at the commencement of the eleventh century, on the charge of Manichæism, a favourite calumny against those who opposed the Papacy—was the immediate cause of the second woe.

This voice from the golden altar said to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, “Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates.” The Saracens had for more than one hundred years been deprived of the sceptre of the East; but a Saracen caliph, with little more than the name, still reigned at Bagdad on the Tigris, near the Euphrates. It was there the Turkish power originated; and four great Mahometan empires in succession rose and conquered, till the “third part of men” was “slain,” in the language of prophecy, or the Eastern empire subverted, in the language of history.

First came the Seljukian Turks, under the guidance of Togrul Beg, to whom, in the year 1055, the Saracen caliph virtually resigned the sovereignty, appointing him “Protector and Governor of the Moslem Empire.” “His successor, Alp Arslan, the valiant lion, passed the Euphrates at the head of the Turkish cavalry,” and severed from the empire the Asiatic provinces of Roum, Armenia, and Georgia, and by the end of the twelfth century, the Seljukian Turks had become masters of Egypt and Jerusalem.

Next appeared Genghis Khan, the Tartar, and he and his successors from 1206 to 1304, or during the entire course of the thirteenth century, subdued almost all Asia, and a large portion of Europe.

The third destroying angel was Timour, or Tamer-

lane, of whom Gibbon says that “from the Irtisch and Volga, to the Persian Gulf, and from the Ganges to Damascus and the Archipelago, Asia was in the hands of Timour; his armies were invincible, his ambition was boundless, and his zeal might aspire to conquer and convert the Christian kingdoms of the West, which already trembled at his name. His empire lasted from 1361 to 1405, and his successors, the Great Moguls, were not strong enough to be a plague any longer to Christendom.*

The fourth angel was loosed from the river Euphrates before Timour, in the year 1301, in the person of Othman, the Ottoman Turk; but as it was reserved for them to complete the prophecy by the capture of Constantinople, and the dissolution of the Eastern empire, and to continue in strength even to our own day, we are clearly right in considering them last. Othman, Amurath, Bajazet, Mahomet II.—“the Great Destroyer”—who wrested Constantinople from the last of the Palæolagi, have left names behind them of terrible remembrance. In the year 1453, the last of these Sultans attacked the metropolis of the East, and after a siege of fifty-three days, “Constantinople was irretrievably subdued by the arm of Mahomet the Second.” The fourth Euphratean angel slew “the third part of men.”

“An hour, a day, a month, and a year” is the chronological period assigned to this woe. On the 18th

* If it is objected that Timour delayed, rather than accelerated, the fall of Constantinople, by impeding the growth of the Ottoman empire, it may be answered that though for want of ships he could not cross the Bosphorus or the Hellespont, and attack Constantinople itself, he was a constant terror to the city, and ruled ferociously over what had once been the fairest provinces of the Greek empire.

January, 1057, Togrul Beg, the first Seljukian Sultan commenced his conquests, and on the 29th of May 1453, Constantinople fell under the arms of Mahomet II., the interval between them being 396 years and 130 days. But the fate of Constantinople was, in fact decided about 24 days before the city was taken, by a manœuvre of the Turkish sultan.* Or, if it is preferred, this difference of 24 days may be equally well accounted for by allowing "this extra number of days for the march of the Turks from the city of Bagdad on the Tigris, whence they started, to the actual passing of the Euphrates."† In the one case the interval between the 18th of January, 1057, when Togrul Beg left Bagdad, and the moment when the Ottomans had virtually possession of Constantinople and in the other case the interval between the time when Togrul Beg crossed the Euphrates, and the time when the Ottomans had actually possession of Constantinople was 396 years and 106 days—"an hour, a day, a month, and a year."‡

* See "Horæ Apocalypticæ" on the passage.

† "Armageddon," from Dallas.

‡ This computation is arrived at by reckoning the "year" in this case as a Julian year, it being the only instance of the use of this word in a prophetic date. Then the reckoning is as follows:—

	DAYS.		YEARS.	DAYS.
A year	$= 365 \frac{1}{4}$		$= 365$	$91 \frac{1}{4}$
A month	$= 30$		$= 30$	
A day	$=$		$= 1$	
An hour	$= \frac{1}{24}$ of a day		$=$	$15 \frac{1}{4}$
			<hr/>	<hr/>
			396	106

"Armageddon," vol. i., 421. In this part of the sixth trumpet I am following this writer almost entirely.

"The myriads of Turkish horse," as Gibbon speaks, is almost word for word the Apocalyptic description of them—"the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand." Scarlet, blue, and yellow, "breastplates of fire and of jacinth, and brimstone," are words which bring the picture of them before our minds. "And the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions, and out of their mouths issued fire, and smoke, and brimstone," an evident reference to the enormous artillery used for the first time, to any great extent, at the siege of Constantinople. "By these there was the third part of them," the Eastern empire, "killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone which issued out of their mouths. For their power is in their mouth and in their tails." This is well illustrated by the inscription on one of the guns taken at the battle of Ferozeshah :—

"Like a dragon, I bear in mind and on body many an old scar,
O foe, be on thy guard from me; I have fire in my mouth;
O straightfaced, the gun is from the Nabob renowned,
In the rectitude and valour of heart unequalled;
A dragon in breadth, a lion in disposition, and delighting in war;
A serpent."*

Here is the lion head, and fire-breathing mouth, the ferocity and lion-like character mingling with that of the serpent, and the same difficulty as in the prophecy of distinguishing between what is descriptive of the gun and what is descriptive of its owner. And then there is one more point, which cannot be omitted even in so brief a sketch: "Their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt;"

* From the *Times* newspaper.

or, as it may be rendered, "commit injustice," a reference, as Mr. Elliott has so well shown, to the oppression of the Turkish pachas, whose emblem of dignity consists in one, two, or three horse-tails, the number of horse-tails denoting their rank.

It was as a plague upon apostate Christendom that the Saracens first, and then the Turks were sent. Nor were they unconscious of their mission. Wicked as their system was, they knew that they were God's scourge upon idolaters. And some years after the destruction of "the third part of men," in the fall of Constantinople, Mahomet, "the great destroyer," published in all the mosques a solemn vow: "I, Mahomet, son of Amurath, sultan, . . . promise to the only God, Creator of all things, by my vow and by my oath, that I will not give sleep to my eyes, . . . till I overturn and trample under the feet of my horses the gods of the nations, these gods of wood, of brass, of silver, of gold, or of painting, which the disciples of Christ have made with their hands. I swear that I will root out their iniquity from the face of the earth."* How striking an accordance with the words of Revelation—"The rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk; neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornications, nor of their thefts"—their persecutions of God's saints, their participation in the enchanted cup of Babylon, their licentiousness of living, and their ecclesiastical frauds.

* Sismondi, quoted in "Armageddon," vol. i. p. 439.

I must not dwell on the vision of the rainbow-encircled angel in chapter x., included within the period of the sixth trumpet, with respect to which Elliott seems to have exhausted all that can be said. The angel is the Angel of the Covenant himself, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, lightening the earth with Reformation brightness. The "seven thunders" are the thunders from the seven hills, the thunders of the Vatican, which, unlike the words of Christ, being false, were to be sealed up, and not written. I hesitate to adopt the chronological interpretation of "a time" in the angel's oath, which seems to preserve the analogy with the oath in Daniel, the angel in Daniel swearing that the time of the end should be a time, times, and the dividing of a time; and the angel in Revelation swearing that a time, or 360 years, should not elapse before the termination of the three times and a-half, and the fulfilment of the mystery of God, and the interpretation "The time shall not be yet, but in the days of the seventh angel;" but, on the whole, give the preference to the latter. The fresh commission of the Reformers is symbolized by St. John receiving the "little book" from the hand of the angel, coupled with the command to prophesy again. And perhaps the construction of Protestant Churches may be indicated by the angel measuring the Temple of God. But I rather incline to believe that the rod in the angel's hand is the sceptre of Christ's kingly authority, and that the meaning of this symbol is the exercise of his sovereignty in distinguishing his spiritual Church from the outward court of professing worshippers.

It is in this outward court that the two witnesses, or Protestant Churches, bear testimony. I assume the

truth of this interpretation of the witnesses as a symbol for Protestant Churches, wishing to offer no opinion as to the origin of the number two, whether chosen in consequence of two distinct lines of witnesses being traceable through the Albigenses and Waldenses deriving their origin from the East and the West, or because two is the number of witnesses prescribed by the Levitical law, or, which is perhaps more probable than either, in reference to the two horns of the second beast—Protestantism in the East, as opposed to Greek error, being one witness; and Protestantism in the West, as opposed to Roman error, being the other witness.* I need hardly say that I use the word Protestantism loosely, and without regard to time, to signify the witness always borne by Christ's faithful people, under whatever name.

They have witnessed in sackcloth. Every Protestant Church has had its martyrs, and in France, Italy, and Spain, and elsewhere, persecution was so far successful as to crush the Reformation. But it was foretold in the prophecy, that the injuries of these witnesses should be avenged. "If any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies; and if any man will hurt them he must in this manner be killed. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy; and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues as often as they will." The evident meaning of these symbols is, that the rejection of these witnesses would be followed by complete spiritual drought, of

* The witnesses are called "candlesticks," or churches, see Rev. i. 20, and "olive trees," see Rom. xi. 17.

which the religious condition of Roman Catholic Europe gives but too distinct an accomplishment, and that the persecution of the Protestant Churches would be in some way avenged upon their persecutors.

Has this been the case? The prophecy needs no other commentary than the words of the historian of the "French Revolution." "The revocation of the Edict of Nantes was the chief remote cause of the French Revolution, and the terrible evils it brought upon the nobility and the government, the natural consequence and just retribution of that abominable act of religious oppression."^{*} And as the same writer speaks of "the religious Reformation and the French Revolution" as "the two great convulsions of modern times," so in our prophecy we find the vision of the rainbow-encircled angel, followed by a view of the long line of witnessing Churches just at the epoch when they come prominently forward on the scene of history, and that by a glimpse of the French Revolution, traced to its "chief remote cause," God's "just retribution" on the persecutors of the saints—"If any man hurt them, he must in this manner be killed."

These two witnesses, it is said, should prophesy "a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth." And it is admitted, by most Protestant commentators, that these twelve hundred and sixty years are not expired yet. Nevertheless, it is supposed by many, or all recent commentators—those of the futurist school, of course, excepted[†]—that the witnesses

* Alison's "History of Europe," vol. x., p. 1002.

† Dr. Candlish, to whom I owe the interpretation, though not the application of *pabbos* on the last page but one, is an exception.

were slain long ago, at the time of the Reformation. The real ground of this, at first sight, strange supposition, inconsistent with our present translation, which fixes the death of the witnesses to the close of their testimony, seems to be this: That event is followed by the expression, "the second woe is past, and behold the third woe cometh quickly,"* which requires us to believe that the death of the witnesses took place before the sounding of the seventh trumpet. The seventh trumpet includes, according to those commentators, the seven vials, and these are considered as commencing with the first French Revolution.

I am not, however, prepared to admit that any of the vials have been yet poured out. I think that the events under the seventh head are, to a great extent, similar to those which are to happen under the eighth. And that in the events to which the vials are commonly attributed, there has been a foreshadowing of those events under the eighth head, of which they are properly predictive. I judge this partly from the mention of "the image" of the beast under the first vial, which cannot be made till the beast is in her perfected form. And, therefore, I see no reason for supposing the seventh trumpet to have sounded, but believe that the sixth is sounding still.

And there appear to be conclusive reasons for supposing that such is the case. If *διαν τελέσων* may mean anything else, its first and most obvious meaning is that given to it by our translators—"when they shall have finished." The propriety of the passage requires this interpretation. There appears^a

* Rev. xi. 14.

total incongruity in the idea of the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth after their death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven. Whatever meaning we attach to those symbols, the emblems will not hang together, unless their death, resurrection, and ascension conclude their testimony and their suffering.

I will not dwell on the weakness, as it seems to me, of the interpretation now prevalent, but rather state my own for the consideration of the reader.

"When they shall have finished their testimony," —that is, at the end of the twelve hundred and sixty years, probably at the beginning of the last three years and a-half of that period—"the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit," or revived Roman empire under its last head, "shall make war against them, and shall overcome them," as also predicted in chapter xiii. 7, "and kill them." Now it is important to observe that the witnesses are Churches. And that to kill a Church is a very different thing from killing a man. This prediction would not be fulfilled by any number of faithful martyrs, but requires for its fulfilment the extinction of life in an ecclesiastical body. And to be consistent, the "dead bodies" must be interpreted of dead Churches, and their not being put into graves, of their retaining an organization and a name after their vitality has left them.

"Their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified." This may be translated "in that street."* The Sodom and Egypt

* ἐπὶ τῆς πλατείας πόλεως τῆς μεγάλης, οὗτις καλέιται κ. τ. λ. "in that street of the great city which, etc." Such seems to me the proper force of the article, and at least allowable.

street of the great city is the meaning, and this particular street of the great city is further designated as the place where our Lord was crucified. Jerusalem is called Sodom by Isaiah (i. 10)—“Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom.” And no other city is called so. I am not sure that it or any other city is expressly called in the Old Testament, Egypt.* But as though to prevent misunderstanding of the symbol, a clue is given to it, a geographic note as an interpreter, “where also our Lord was crucified.” It appears then that the scene of the Church’s last conflict is to be especially Jerusalem.

And it is to be observed, that as Jerusalem is used in the Book of Revelation as a symbol of the Church, the city itself could not be easily identified, except by some such method. The reader is asked to consider how, if the Spirit were pleased to speak of the city Jerusalem, it would be possible to distinguish it from the symbolical Jerusalem otherwise. Babylon is identified with Rome, by saying “that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth,” and the Sodom street with Jerusalem, as being the place “where also our Lord was crucified.”

We have already seen that the two-horned beast, or united apostasies under the patronage of the eighth head, would make an image of the beast or eighth ecumenical council of the East and West. And in the expression, “they of the people, and kindred, and tongues, and nations”†—we have an indication of the same thing. The persons meant are plainly deputies from all nations, in other words, a general council. We have already

* Unless perhaps in Amos ix. 7.

† ἐκ τῶν λαῶν κ . τ . λ .

seen such a general council, or image of the beast, under its last head, predicted as the result of a combination of the Greek and Latin apostasies, and here the place of its convocation seems to be distinctly stated, the city of Jerusalem. A council met there once to crucify Christ. And another council will meet there to destroy Christ's churches, and, if they might, his Church.*

It seems that the difference between this council and those which have preceded it, will be that it will succeed, where they have failed. The fifth Lateran Council, to whom this prediction has been applied, summoned Christ's witnesses, and they would not come. The Council of Trent stood with open arms, ready to receive them, but they would not come. But to this future council they will come. For the deputies shall see them. They shall be present before them by their representatives. But what they shall see will be their dead bodies—the lifeless organizations of churches, from which the living breath of God's Spirit has departed. Nor will they "suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves." The council shall retain the names of these fallen and dead churches for three years and a-half, and celebrate a triumph over vanquished Protestantism. "And they that dwell on the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another, because these two prophets tormented them that dwell on the earth."

Many past events have been supposed by commentators to be the fulfilment of this prophecy of the

* Many Roman Catholics advocate the removal of the Pope to Jerusalem. *La Papaute à Jérusalem*, par l'Abbé Michon. See Appendix III.

death of the witnesses. If the two witnesses are Protestant Churches, they all labour under the fatal objection of making the witnesses prophesy in sackcloth after their death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven, besides requiring a forced explanation of ὅταν τελέσωσι as meaning something else than "when they shall have finished."

Bishop Newton mentions many instances in which the space of three years and a-half of persecution has been followed by deliverance, and then adds: "In all these cases, there may be some resemblance to the prophecy before us of the death and resurrection of the witnesses; and it may please an overruling Providence so to dispose and order events that the calamities and afflictions of the Church may in some measure run parallel one to another, and all the former efforts of that tyrannical and persecuting power, called the beast, may be the types and figures, as it were, of this his last and greatest effort against the witnesses. But though these instances sufficiently answer in some respects, yet they are deficient in others, and particularly in this, that they are none of them the last persecution; others have been since, and in all probability will be again. Besides, as the two witnesses are designed to be the representatives of Protestants in general, so the persecution must be general too, and not confined to this or that particular Church or nation. We are now living under the sixth trumpet, and the empire of the Euphratean horsemen, or Othmans, is still subsisting, and, perhaps, in as large extent as ever; the beast is still reigning; and the witnesses are still—in some times and places more, in some less—prophesying in sackcloth. It will not be till toward the end of their testimony, and that end

seemeth to be yet at some distance, that the great victory and triumph of the beast, and the suppression, and resurrection, and exaltation of the witnesses will take place." So wrote Bishop Newton in 1786, and it is strange that now such an event should seem to any less probable than then.

I do not agree with Bishop Newton in regarding the death of the witnesses as in itself symbolical of persecution, though I think it may be shown that persecution will result from it and accompany it. But the witnesses are Churches, and if what has gone before is correct, they are to be overcome either by the force or the influence of the French Emperor, or of the French and Russian emperors united as the emperor of the West and the emperor of the East. The Protestant Churches, overcome by the sword or the arts of the ruler or rulers of the revived Roman empire, send representatives to this ecumenical council, called, no doubt, under pretence of peace, and are there triumphed over by the rest.

But the triumph is a short one. After three years and a-half the witnesses rise to life, and are caught up into heaven. The symbol is drawn from the resurrection and ascension of the saints—an event of which I am persuaded no date is given; but the event foretold must relate to Churches, and indicate a revival of life in certain particular Churches.

And here, though I will not dwell on it, may perhaps be the point of reconciliation between those predictions which seem to threaten this country, and those, like Isaiah xviii., in which, as shown by Bishop Horsley and Mr. Chamberlaine,* England is foretold as the prin-

* "Isaiah's Call to England."

cipal agent in the restoration of all Israel; between Isaiah ii. 16, "the day of the Lord of hosts shall . . . upon all the ships of Tarshish," and Isaiah lx. 9, "the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy son from far." There is mercy and glory for England hereafter, but not till she has gone through the humiliation which her sins are bringing upon her.

Hitherto we have only seen future events in their bearing on Churches. I believe, with many others that in the 14th chapter we have the history of the present time from the date of the Reformation, when the new song of redeeming love was heard throughout Christendom, and may learn from the symbols more of God's dealings with individuals.

The vision of the heavenly harpers is a beautiful picture of the Reformation. We have already seen in considering the sealing vision, that the mystic number 144,000 is symbolical of the Church in a particular age, being a perfect square or section of the perfect cube—the innumerable multitude of paedagoges in the fifth chapter, and the New Jerusalem in the twenty-first chapter—of which the length, breadth, and height, are equal. This cube symbolizes the Church aggregated from all ages, and any section of it, the square, the 144,000, the Church in a single age. Here it is the Church in the age of the Reformation; not any one Protestant Church, but Protestant Churches put together, but Christ's : "the blessed company of all faithful people who looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Zion, with Him an hundred, forty, and four thousand, his Father's name written on their foreheads; and they heard a voice from heaven, as the voice

waters, and as the voice of a great thunder; and I heard the voice of harpers, harping with their harps. And they sang as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders; and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, that were redeemed from the earth." How fresh was the first burst of the new song of redeeming love as the reformers sang it. Then, once again, as in the early Church, and as in the revival of our own day, men's lips sang because their hearts sang. And then was seen the distinction between nature and grace. Only those could learn that song who were taught it by God. It needed a new nature to learn the new song.

The apostasy had forbidden those to marry who wished wholly to follow Christ, and attached a peculiar sanctity to celibacy. But here God himself gives the honour they claimed for their monks and nuns to his people, who had learned the new song. He pronounces those Christ's true followers, and the real virgin souls, who have left Babylon, and stand on mount Zion—who have "come unto mount Zion, and the city of the living God."* "These are they"—and not those who falsely claim this honour—"which were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the first-fruits unto God, and to the Lamb." Every title of holiness and glory which was claimed for those whom Rome reckons saints, is reclaimed for those whom Rome burned as heretics, and others like them, for all who were touched by grace and made to sing the new song †

* Heb. xii. 22.

† See "Horæ Apocalypticæ."

The next great event in the history of God's Church, was that which has been called the Second Reformation, which, commencing with Whitefield and Wesley, in the middle of last century, has continued to the present time in the missionary enterprises of our day: it is known by friend and foe as the Evangelical revival. And how did God prefigure it to John? "I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." Whitefield, Wesley, and their associates of hallowed memory, Henry Venn, and Rowland Hill, and Romaine, and Toplady, and Hervey, and others too numerous to record, preached the everlasting Gospel; and their immediate successors, among whom may be mentioned such laymen as Wilberforce, and Grant, and Thornton, and Teignmouth, and the elder Macaulay, and the elder Stephen, whose name a grandson may be permitted to recall with the love and honour due to it, engaged in those holy efforts for the repression of the slave-trade, and the abolition of West India slavery, and the opening of the East Indies to Christian teaching, at the renewal of the Company's charter, which have been the glory of this century; and in company with Owen and Pratt, and faithful ministers of Christ from every Evangelical Church, by Bible Societies and Missionary Societies, fulfilled the Apocalyptic symbol, and in the most open manner sent forth on wings of love "the everlasting Gospel to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." Nor

have there been wanting, especially as time has rolled on, others, like Edward Bickersteth, to mingle with the missionary enterprise the remembrance that the day of the Lord is at hand, and that the hour of his judgment is come.

The Evangelical revival had not long commenced—about half a century—before the French Revolution broke out. The most distinguishing feature of that period was the apparent downfall of the whole Roman Catholic system. “There followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.” As, politically, the most striking result of that great convulsion was the rise of the French empire, or seventh head of the ten-horned beast, so, ecclesiastically, its most striking result was the total fall, for a time, of the Papacy. It was a question, at the congress of Vienna, whether the Pope should be restored or not. So manifestly was this the great feature of the period following the French Revolution, that many commentators reckon 1789 the close of the 1260 years. And even to the present time, notwithstanding other tendencies of a very different character, there is still much which sounds like an echo of the angel’s cry, “Babylon is fallen, is fallen.” For the three angels fly in the midst of heaven all together, and their mingled voices exhibit the various tendencies of the present age. Babylon fell at the French Revolution to rise again. There was no glory to enlighten the earth in the destroying angel who announced her fall. But another angel, as we find from the first verse of the eighteenth chapter, will come down from heaven, and lighten the earth with his

glory, and cry mightily with a strong voice, saying, “Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen ;” and then “shall that great city, Babylon, be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.”* But this fall of Babylon, from which she shall never rise, is future ; whereas that fall of Babylon which the angel announced in chapter xiv., and which our fathers witnessed, and which, in some respects, we witness still, is past or present. In a somewhat different form Babylon will rise ; and already we may hear in the distance the strong voice of another angel, whose approach will indicate that she is lifted up once more before her destruction.

“ And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast, and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation ; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb ; and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever ; and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. Here is the patience of the saints ; here are they that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth : yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours ; and their works do follow them.”

The “loud voice” indicates great danger. The mention of the image of the beast shows that the time of this warning is that of the convocation of the general

* Rev. xviii. 21.

council at Jerusalem. The threatening against worshiping the beast and his image—that is, the ten-horned beast under its last head and the council convoked by its authority—and the omission of all mention of the two-horned beast, by whose agency the image was made, shows the subordinate position of the Pope personally in respect to the empire and the council, at the time in question; and the terrible language employed in warning proves the greatness of the danger of apostasy. Moreover, the expression, “Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus,” seems intended to teach us that none will resist the temptation but those who are believers in Jesus, and sanctified by the Spirit. And then there is yet another intimation, the real purport of which commentators have been rather unwilling than unable to see. For why, in this connection and at such a time, should an emphasis so strong be laid on the blessedness of dying in the Lord, unless at that time death were more than usually to be feared? unless it were an epoch of martyrdom, and Christians must be ready not to suffer only, but also to die for the name of the Lord Jesus.

And, as illustrating this point, we must remember, on the one hand, that the saints under the altar slain in Pagan persecution, were only bidden to rest “until their fellow-servants also, and their brethren that should be killed, as they were, should be fulfilled,” intimating that persecution to death would continue to the end. And, on the other hand, that when John beheld the millennial glory, he said, “I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the

beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or on their hands, and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."* In which expression I doubt not he intended to include all the saints of God. But the picture is drawn from those in the forefront of the battle, who had resisted the peculiar temptation of the last days, that of worshipping the imperial antichrist and his ecumenical council, and these are described as having been beheaded "for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God." The foremost among them, whom John especially looked at, were martyrs. And it is not a little remarkable that the manner of their martyrdom is specified. The Christians under the Pagan emperors were most often burned, or crucified, or thrown to wild beasts. The martyrs in old Papal times were almost always burned. But these are to be beheaded. Is there any nation among whom beheading is so much the ordinary mode of punishment as to fit it for a symbol? I know but one, and that one is the nation out of which arises the eighth head of the ten-horned beast.

I conclude, then, that the death of Protestant Churches, by appearing in the person of their representative at a general council of Christendom at Jerusalem and West, in subordination to the authorities of the revived Roman empire, will be accompanied by the fearful persecution of Christ's faithful people, who will not submit to this council, and, as troublers of universal peace, will suffer at the hands of power then dominant, the punishment of deservedness. Will not actually suffer it, for Christ will fulfil

* Rev. xi. 4.

coming those who are alive and remain; but all will be compelled by their allegiance to Christ to stand ready to suffer it, rather than bear the brand, whatever it may be, of apostasy, or worship the beast and his image.

We have up to this point been pursuing the line of Gentile prophecy. As before stated, that of Jewish prophecy ought to be considered in entire independence of it. I shall here do no more than to mark out two or three leading points in it.*

Prophecy leads us to expect a partial restoration of the Jews to their own land in unbelief, the rebuilding of their temple in apostasy, and the acceptance of a false Messiah. (Isaiah lxvi. 1; John v. 43.) There is reason to believe that this restoration will be the result of political intrigue.

The "abomination of desolation," spoken of by Daniel the prophet, or the Roman eagle, is to stand more than once where it ought not. This appears from a careful comparison of the prophecies delivered by our Lord at different times and in different places, and "whenever," ὅταν, it shall be seen, Christians must take warning and escape from the city.

It will be placed there for the last time when the wilful king shall "plant the tabernacle of his palaces between the seas in the glorious holy mountain."

The whole current of Daniel xi. requires that the wilful king should be he who plants his tabernacle between the seas. But I feel satisfied that the true translation of verse 40 is, "At the time of the end shall the king of the south push with him for his own aggrandisement," giving its full force to the con-

* On Jewish prophecy I draw much from "Armageddon."

jugation, and that "come against him" may be translated "come to him," implying a confederacy, not a conflict of powers, which, when combined, overflow and take possession of Palestine.

There can be little doubt that "the wilful king" of Daniel, plainly the Roman power—both civil and ecclesiastical, I think, regarded in the distance as one—is identical when in the Holy Land with the "idol shepherd," Zech. xi. 17, and with the false Messiah whom the Jews will receive.

It appears probable that some of the dates of Daniel admit of a short-time as well as a long-time interpretation. And especially that the time, times, and a-half describe three years and a-half of Jewish tribulation, either coincident with or perhaps more likely immediately following the three years and a-half during which the witnesses lie dead, or the tribulation of the Church. Nor is it unlikely that the 1290 days and 1335 days may have a short measurement from the last setting up of the Roman eagle in Jerusalem, as well as a long measurement from the setting of it up by Titus.

The Jewish tribulation seems to be the work of their false Messiah, at first worshipped by them as an idol and then smiting them. There are other events which I am not careful to arrange in order, as they belong to the period between Christ's coming in the clouds to take his Church to glory, and his coming with all his saints, and standing on Mount Olivet—a period, I think, of undefined length; the gathering of all Israel; the invasion of Gog, prince of Rosh, Meshek, and Tubal, Emperor of all the Russias, the eastern head of the Roman empire; the last siege of Jerusalem; the mission of Elijah the prophet. But previous to all

these, and, as I believe, synchronous with the ascension of the Church to glory, is the pouring out of the Spirit of grace and supplication on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, Zech. xii. 10, after suffering from the oppression of their false Messiah.

Now, if we endeavour to unite this line of Jewish prophecy with that already considered of Gentile prophecy, the result will be this.

The eighth head of the beast must be the false Messiah. In some way the Jews, restored most likely by the influence of France, will be induced to join with apostate Christendom in worshipping the imperial Antichrist. The Jew, as well as the Romanist and the Greek, will be enamoured by that crystal palace of all religions, and perhaps nominally Christian, accept him who has restored him as really his Messiah. How near the Jews were to worshipping the first Napoleon is matter of history. But after a while their eyes will be opened, or the false Messiah will throw off the mask, and they also, like the Church of God, being beloved of God for the Father's sake, will be purified by trial.

Somewhere across these lines of Jewish and Gentile prophecy, but I think at a point unmarked, the coming of Christ to take his people to himself flashes like the lightning. It is the same appearance which melts Judah and translates the saints. But all attempts to fix the chronology of it are vain. The persecution of the Church must come first. The last siege of Jerusalem must follow it. It comes between the two, and it is at midnight the cry is heard, "Behold the Bridegroom cometh."

If the views here advanced are Scriptural, they are

of the utmost importance. They teach us that some of the tendencies of the present day, about which we might otherwise doubt, tend to evil. If the last conflicts of the Church spring from the action of a general council, we shall do well to beware how we fall in with that desire for synodical action, of which a general council is the natural development. If the Jews are to be restored in unbelief, and to worship a false Messiah, and to fraternize with apostate Christians, we shall be warned from allowing the light which streams from Jerusalem's millennial glory to blind us to the more immediate future, or thinking there is peace for the Church, when political combinations make Palestine once more their home. And, above all, if the last danger of the Church is to spring from a specious attempt to unite again divided Christendom in the formation of a grand and really Catholic ecclesiastical polity, full of professions of peace, we must beware how we trifle with error. I am very much afraid that some of our brethren, impressed with the evils of the Pope's temporal sovereignty, do not perceive that he would be much more dangerous should, as the "Times" expressed it, "the great priest come out of the little despot." And that others in looking for an avowedly infidel Antichrist, overlook the real Antichrist, and lend themselves to helping forward the delusion, that the differences between the Roman and Greek apostasies and the truth are less vital than they are. The temptation, to some minds, would be almost irresistible to fall in with the tide of wonder and delight, along which this nation would be carried to hail a union of all the Churches of the world. It would seem so grand, so harmonious, so satisfying. But when it

comes, then will be the test who those are who have received the love of the truth that they may be saved.

When an united Church—embracing the East and the West; instinct with the life, so much coveted by many, derived from synodical action in its grandest form; surrounded by restored Jews worshipping the same head; supported by an empire, whether under one emperor, or more, exceeding in extent any hitherto existing, and embracing in some respects all the greatness of Babylon, Persia, and Greece, as well as that of Rome; possessed of the power of deceiving them that dwell on the earth with real miracles, and able to enforce its decision on the peril of death; seated in the most ancient metropolis of Christendom, the city of holy associations and blessed memories—dazzles and overawes the world;—it will then be seen who are Christ's faithful witnesses, who will bear the cross and win the crown.

And yet through that dark cloud of temptation we may see the form of the Son of Man. To him the East and West alike belong. Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome must all yield their crowns to him. He is coming to take the kingdom whose right it is. Then the gold, and the silver, the iron, the brass, and the clay shall be made as the chaff of the summer threshing-floor. Happy those who are united by living faith to Christ. They shall overcome the world. They shall not love their lives even to the death. And when the hour of tribulation has passed, they shall live and reign as kings and priests unto God.

CHAPTER XI.

THE SEVEN SIGNS AND THE SEVEN VIALS.

The purpose of this chapter is to glance at the general arrangement of the Apocalypse, which at the general more simple than has been often supposed, and to me itself important, as giving us God's own classification of the events of time, and his estimate of their relative magnitude. The general scheme is logically prior to the particular details; but almost always we rise from the particular to the general; and if I have carried my reader along with me in the explanation given of the various symbols, we are in a better position than were to begin with, for investigating the broad outline of the book.

Some commentators have supposed the seals and trumpets to be contemporaneous lines of prophecy

This requires the supposition that the seventh seal is the climax of a series of magnificent visions—consisting of half an hour's silence; and therefore the great mass of interpreters have followed Mede in considering the seventh seal to include the seven trumpets, an argument which appears to me to be proved by its fitting in with that wonderfully minute narration of the seals which is found in the "Horæ Apocalypticæ."

It has been further assumed that, as the s-

includes the seven trumpets, so the seventh trumpet includes the seven vials. The analogy appears at first sight natural, but will, I think, vanish on more minute examination; for, if we turn to the seventh seal, in the eighth chapter, we find it instantly followed by the seven trumpets, whereas, if we turn to the seventh trumpet in the twelfth chapter, it is followed by the vision of the woman clothed with the sun, which belongs, as is admitted by those who hold that the seven vials are included in the seventh trumpet, to the early ages of the Church; and the seven vials are not introduced till several chapters after. This is explained by the supposition of two lines of prophecy, parallel with each other, being so mingled as to require the skilful employment of certain marks to disentangle them, and arrange them in their separate chronological order.

With the usual arrangement of the seals and trumpets I entirely concur. This brings us down to the end of the twelfth chapter. Now if we turn to chapter xv., where the seven vials are first mentioned, there is no reference whatever to the trumpets; but it is said, "And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous: seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God."

The seven vials stand precisely in the same relation to this last "sign in heaven," in which the seven trumpets stand to the seventh seal; and if it should be found that there was not only one other sign, but six other signs preceding it, the analogy would be complete: seven seals, the seventh including seven trumpets; and seven signs, the seventh including seven vials.

Such is exactly the case. If we turn back to the thirteenth chapter, we shall find that the series of signs commences immediately after the close of the seventh trumpet; and the seven signs are as follows:—The first, the Woman clothed with the sun; the second, the Seven-headed beast; the third, the Two-horned beast; the fourth, the Lamb on Mount Zion, with the hundred and fifty and four thousand harpers; the fifth, Three angels, proclaiming each a message; the sixth, the Harvest and vintage; the seventh, the Seven last vials of the wrath of God.

There are, as it seems to me, two distinct lines of prophecy, each arranged after the same plan: the first consisting of seven seals, at the opening of each of which some fresh vision was presented to the apostle's mind, the last of these seals being divided into seven distinct visions, each marked by the sound of a trumpet; and the second consisting of seven signs, each also a separate vision; the last sign, like the last seal, being divided into seven distinct visions, each marked by the pouring out of a vial.

The signs are not numbered in the book itself, which is the reason why this arrangement, so natural and symmetrical, has escaped hitherto, as far as I am aware, the notice of commentators. But I have already shown that they can be counted. And, as we have already seen, that the first seal commences with the Emperor Nerva in the first century, and the first sign, or sun-clothed woman, in apostolic days, we have two series of prophecies, totally distinct and uninterrupted, reaching down from the age of the apostles, the one commencing with chapter vi., the other with chapter xii.; and closing respectively with chapter xi.

and chapter xvi.; the close in each case being marked by the same event, “a great hail.”

It may be asked why there should be two lines of prophecy, reaching over the same space of time. The answer is not difficult. When we ourselves wish to record a history, we may do it in two ways—by a succession of events, or by a succession of subjects; and in the first of this series events are narrated, in the second, subjects are treated; by which course the history is given with a completeness which it could have possessed on no other plan.

Of most of the seven signs, an interpretation has been already given in the preceding pages. I have now to gather them together in their proper position.

The first sign, or the woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, is the Church of the living God, arrayed in Christ’s righteousness, and trampling on the world. The second sign, or the beast with seven heads and ten horns, is the antichristian empire—first heathen, then apostate. The third sign, or the beast with two horns, is the apostate church. The fourth sign, or the Lamb on Mount Zion, with the hundred and forty and four thousand harpers, is the Reformation, with its new song of redeeming love. The fifth sign consists of three angels, each proclaiming a message: one, the everlasting Gospel to all nations, the era of evangelical revival and missionary enterprise, commencing with Whitefield, Wesley, and their associates, in the middle of last century;* another, saying, “Babylon is fallen, is fallen,” the era

* In 1732, the Moravians commenced their missionary enterprises, and about the same time Whitefield began to preach.

of the French Revolution closely following, the distinguishing feature of which was the utter humiliation of Babylon, whether regarded as the city of Rome, or the church of Rome; and another, warning with a loud voice against the worship of the beast and his image, indicating the lifting up of Babylon from her fall, and the last danger of the Church from the apostate empire under its eighth head, and its eighth general council at Jerusalem. And it is worth remarking how this harmonizes with Rev. xviii. 21, where "a mighty angel"—evidently at a subsequent time, after a more mighty voice, "Babylon is fallen"—"took up a stone, like a great mill-stone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all." When, at the French Revolution, the angel said, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen," she fell to rise again, and become greater than ever. But when the angel, in Revelation xviii., who lightens the earth with his glory, shall say, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen," another mighty angel will execute the sentence; and "that great city, Babylon, be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all." It is the first fall of Babylon which our fathers witnessed, and from which she has not altogether recovered yet, which is included in the fifth sign, which closes with the triumph of apostasy under its last form. And it must be observed that from the expression, "the third angel followed them," we may fairly infer that all three tendencies would be witnessed together, just as we see them: evangelical revival, humiliation of the Papacy, its rising to fresh spiritual power in conjunction with the apostate empire; forming in the eye of God, and to

a great degree in the eyes of men, the characteristic features of the age we live in.

The sixth sign, or the harvest and the vintage, is Christ, the great Reaper, gathering with a sickle, sharp, yet golden, a harvest of martyrs, and an angel of wrath destroying their persecutors.

The seventh and last sign, or the seven angels having the seven last vials of the wrath of God, I believe with the futurists to be as yet future; but I do not agree with the futurists in expecting their fulfilment to be literal, but, like the rest of the book, symbolical.

Certain events, which began with the French Revolution, are commonly assigned to these vials, and have much resemblance to them. But we must bear in mind that the seventh head of the beast does greatly resemble the eighth; and that, as we have just seen, the fall of Babylon to rise again, during the revolutionary and imperial period past, is a foreshadowing of that fall of Babylon, after which she will be found no more. I am therefore disposed to think that the events generally assigned to the vials are very distinct fore-shadowings, in connection with the seventh head, of what the real events predicted will be under the eighth head. And though unwilling to hazard what is merely a conjecture, it appears to me not improbable that the sixth vial, or "drying up the great river Euphrates," will have its real accomplishment in the dissolution of Asiatic Turkey after the Mohammedans are driven, as events prognosticate and they themselves expect, to retire from Europe.

And in order to complete the general view of the Apocalypse here given, I will add that I identify "the

judgment of Babylon occupies chapter xvii., xviii., and the first part of chapter xix., and is identical with the vials, by being shown to St. John by the vial angels. And it is most natural to suppose that the close of the nineteenth chapter is identical with the great hail. These chapters form, in common segment to each series, and may be looked upon as belonging at once to the seventh seal, the seventh trumpet, the seventh sign, and the seventh vial.

The New Jerusalem in chapter xxi. was also visited by John by one of the vial angels, but at the close of the thousand years and the judgment of the great white throne, to intimate that it would be manifested during the vials at the first resurrection, the translation of saints, but yet, as being eternal, in proper place at the close of all things.

It appears to me most probable that the four living creatures on the sea of glass are disembodied saints, because they are described as four "beasts" or "living beings," who appear throughout the book.

to intimate that some of God's saints will be living on earth during the sixth vial. The first resurrection precedes, as St. Paul taught the Thessalonians, the rapture of the living saints, and there may be an interval between them. But if we are right in interpreting the "living beings" of disembodied souls, the resurrection cannot take place till the angels have received the vials, and the translation of the living Church cannot take place till the commencement of the sixth vial.

The series of visions, consisting of seals and trumpets, closes with the seventh trumpet. I doubt not that the first blast of this trumpet is identical with the trumpet sounding in 1 Thess. iv. 16, and "the last trump" in 1 Cor. xv. 52, and is the period of the first resurrection, and also of the translation of the Church. It is followed by "the great hail," the "third woe" upon apostate Christendom, showing that the Church will be raised and translated previous to the afflictions, described in Revelation xix. and Ezekiel xxxviii., xxxix., which will fall on Europe and on Palestine.

The earthquake in chapter xi. 13, "The same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake was slain of men seven thousand, and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven," appears to correspond, in point of time, with the vintage in chapter xiv.; but to describe different results of the same sudden judgment, or the persecutors of God's saints. The place is different: "a thousand six hundred furlongs," which is the measure of the wine-press, being the length of the Holy Land, and the tenth part of the city, being probably England, which not only was one of the ten horns when the beast rose from the sea, but

"the tenth," being the last to appear. And this is different: in the one case total destruction, other case severe punishment followed by submission and repentance.

At what exact moment in the second or seventh trumpet of the first series begins to sound fixed. It may coincide with the first vial, or with the last, or with some epoch between them. It is certain, to increase our watchfulness.

There is more than one point of view in which the general scheme of the book is important.

It teaches us what are those matters which the eye of God, possess the deepest interest and significance. But, besides this, it enables us to see how it is that much light to be thrown on prophecy without knowing either the day or the hour when the Man cometh. There seems to be a strong intimation that it is during the pouring out of the vials that come. But if I am right in this general plan of prophecy, the pouring out of the vials is subsequent to the termination of the Church's long tribulation, the length of which is our only certain date. We know for 1260 years that tribulation was to last, and not end for twenty years to come. There seems to be hope that it may terminate much sooner, very soon indeed. But come when the last and brunt of trial may, it is not Christ's coming. "Warn us of his advent, but is not the advent. " Son of Man cometh at an hour that ye know not."

There is a text immediately preceding the pouring out of the vials, which acquires a peculiar significance from the views just stated: "And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and it

power; and no man was able to enter into the temple till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled."

Before the vials were poured out, John "saw as it were a sea of glass, and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God." These seem to be those reaped just before by the great husbandman, still waiting for the consummation of all their hopes in the resurrection of the body. The sea of glass is an emblem from the temple of Solomon. Instead of the laver which Moses made for the tabernacle, he formed a vessel so large, that it is called the brazen sea, and here in heaven itself, as the saints martyred in Pagan days are represented as under the altar, so the saints martyred in the Church's last tribulation are represented as on a sea of glass or crystal mingled with fire. They are disembodied souls, but yet, in opposition to the semi-Popish dreams of some about a separate place, John saw them in heaven itself in front of the throne of God.

When this has taken place, when the last martyrs have been reaped by Christ, then it is that the seven angels having the seven last plagues, come out of the temple and prepare to pour their vials on the earth. No one can read the description of these vials without seeing that the symbols are drawn from the plagues of Egypt. Israel was in Egypt while those plagues were inflicted, but the plagues touched them not. Such will be the case with the Israel of God during the pouring out of these vials. And there is a remarkable intimation of Christ's coming in the course of these events. "Behold I come as a thief: blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked

and they see his shame." And an equally remarkable intimation, as already observed, of the completion of the Church in the first resurrection at the same time in xxi. 9 : " And there came unto me one of the angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me saying, Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife." The seven vials are mentioned in chapter xvi., and not again till this verse in chapter xxi.; nor is it possible to assign any reason why it should be one of the angels which have the seven last vials who showed John the bride, the Lamb's wife, unless it be that during the pouring out of one of those vials the bride would be really manifested in the resurrection and translation of the saints.

But though Christ will not come till some of the vials are poured out on a guilty world, the expectation of his coming may be made much brighter. And not only so, but it seems to be foretold that, before he comes, the day of grace will have passed away. In considering the Parable of the Ten Virgins, it appeared that there was an interval between the midnight cry, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh," and the actual coming of the Bridegroom, during which it was too late for the foolish virgins to buy oil. And as that cry was made at midnight, or during the darkest period of tribulation, so it seemed that the hour of mercy would pass away while Christ's people were suffering, though Christ himself might not come till the morning watch. It is just the same lesson which I read in the Apocalypse. The vials are poured out immediately after the last harvest of martyrs. That is the midnight when the cry is heard, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh."

The saints in heaven and the saints on earth hear it, and are glad. But that same moment fixes the condition of those unsaved. It is the hour of God's wrath on a guilty world. "And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power, and no man was able to enter into the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled."

The temple, like the tabernacle, was an emblem of the Church. The word temple, in this place especially, signifies the shrine, the inner house, the holy of holies, where was the mercy-seat, and into which the high priest entered only once a-year.

The high priest's entering into this most holy place symbolized the entrance of Jesus into heaven itself on our behalf, to make intercession for us. In consequence of his having done so, there is entrance for the believing sinner into the holiest also. "We have access," Paul says, "through him, by one Spirit, unto the Father." We come, he says, also, "by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, his flesh." And this is, in fact, one way in which we might express the conversion of a sinner, his obtaining right of admission, in Christ, within the veil, into the holiest of all, the very presence-chamber of God himself. Christ has obtained this entrance into the holiest for us, and at present every man who goes to Jesus may find admission there. We have entrance there even now in believing prayer. There we come, and have all sin washed away. We come there, and commune with God as a friend. There we obtain help in difficulty, guidance in perplexity, comfort in sorrow, victory in temptation, and everything we need, at all times, and under all circumstances. And who can say

how great a privilege this is of entrance into the temple in heaven? Man is by nature separated from God. When convinced by the Spirit of sin, he feels this separation more keenly. It is brought before his mind. He knows himself shut out where others enter in. But the believer enters in. He goes into the secret of God's tabernacle. He has access to the innermost shrine. By faith in Jesus, he goes, not without reverence, but without fear, to the very mercy-seat itself. This is one of the very best privileges the believer has, that to him the temple of God is always open in heaven.

The whole ground of our admission there is, that Christ, our Head and our High Priest, is there. As Paul expresses it in Hebrews, "Seeing, then, that we have a great High Priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us, therefore, come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Christ is himself seated on the throne of grace to introduce us to the Father. The High Priest stood before it. He sits upon it, the Father's co-equal Son, as well as our Brother, who was in all points tempted like as we are. This gives us a confidence in drawing near to the throne of grace which we could not have had otherwise. We could not otherwise have come at all, whereas now we may come boldly. The temple stands in heaven open to us. Its veil is rent, and can no longer impede our approach. We come by right, and present ourselves before him, and receive unnumbered blessings by drawing near to the mercy-seat.

“ From every stormy wind that blows,
From every swelling tide of woes,
There is a calm, a sure retreat—
The Saviour on his mercy-seat.

“ He welcomes sinners there, and sheds
The Holy Spirit on their heads,
And gives with God communion sweet,
At this, the blood-stained mercy-seat.

“ Here is the place where spirits blend,
And friend holds fellowship with friend,
While sundered far by faith they meet
Around one common mercy-seat.

“ Ah! whither could we flee for aid,
When tempted, desolate, dismayed,
Or how the hosts of hell defeat,
Had suffering saints no mercy-seat?

“ There, there, on eagle’s wings we’ll soar,
Till time and sense shall seem no more ;
All heaven come down our souls to greet,
And glory crown the mercy-seat.”

But the question might naturally arise, whether this possibility of entrance into the holiest by the blood of Jesus were to be for all men to all time. Numbers evidently act on the supposition that such is to be the case since they put off indefinitely taking advantage of the offered blessing. They seem to think that they may at any time have this blessing. But in many places Scripture forbids such a supposition. “ Now is the accepted time.” But a time is coming which will be a day of salvation no longer. And this it is which seems to me the prophetic lesson of the closed temple, that when once the seven angels have commenced pouring out the seven

last vials, there will be conversion no longer. "temple was filled with smoke from the glory of and from his power, and no man was able to enter the temple till the seven plagues of the seven as were fulfilled."

In the temple itself there was sometimes a cloud over the mercy-seat, which did not prevent the priest from entering in, but seems to have encouraged him in doing so. And once it was so filled with cloud that the priests could not minister. This was the consecration of Solomon's temple. "It came to pass when the priests were come out of the holy place that the cloud filled the house of the Lord. So that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord. Then spoke Solomon, The Lord said that he would dwell in the thick darkness." From which it would appear that it was a cloud of darkness which filled the house. Such was the appearance which John in the vision saw in the temple in heaven. "The temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power."

This seems to indicate a deep and overwhelming conviction, on the minds both of God's people and others, of God's glory and God's power. At the present time there are two very different streams of thought running in opposite directions. Numbers are absolutely shutting their eyes to God's glory and to God's power. They are imagining a God without the glory of holiness, and without power to punish sin. That God's holiness is his glory the Scriptures teach us. "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of thy glory." And when men are blind to

holiness they are blind to his glory. When they reckon him too mild to punish sin, they are blind both to his glory and his power. They attribute to him weakness. This is a widespread feeling about God. Men forget the thunder, and the lightning, and the roaring cataract, and the foaming ocean, and think of nothing but blue skies and green leaves. God is the God of glory, and the God of majesty, and the God of power; but these men shut their eyes to his brightness. Man is weak and yielding about sin, and thinks God altogether such an one as himself in this respect, and weak and yielding about it also. And there is another stream of thought running in the opposite direction. Where God has been teaching there has sprung up a deep consciousness of God's glory in condemning sin, and his power in punishing it. There cannot be a more distinct contradiction than exists between the tendency of men's thoughts, when left to themselves, and the tendency of men's thoughts when God is working in the hearts about this particular matter. We know how deep, how fearfully deep, is this conviction in many cases in which God is himself producing it. Only it is a conviction now full of hope; because while God is not bound by promise so to do, he does actually most often lead those convinced ones to Jesus, and terminates their terror or anxiety by enabling them to believe in him. In fact the temple stands wide open, and there may be seen within it the ark of the covenant, and the mercy-seat above it, and in most instances the sinner convinced of sin is led in his time of need to go to the throne of grace and find mercy.

But the temple being filled with smoke from the glory of the Lord, and from his power, seems to teach

us of such a conviction with no possibility of such an issue. It seems as though at that time there will be what a revival would be all over Christendom, in which there should be universal conviction and no conversion. The very mercy-seat will be hidden by smoke from the glory of God, and of his power. To produce this, nothing will be needed but a strong and deep impression that the Lord is coming, with no inward drawing to Jesus as a Saviour. This seems to be foretold by our Lord himself in those words (Luke xxi. 24), "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled," the day of Gentile grace have passed away. "And there shall be signs in the sun and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth, distress of nations with perplexity: the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth." It is when the day of grace, the times of the Gentiles, shall have passed away, and before the sign of the Son of Man shall appear in heaven, and they see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with power and great glory, that this deep and overpowering, but hopeless, conviction will fasten itself on the minds of the unconverted, who they seek in vain for oil to feed their fading torch according to the parable of the virgins; or, as in Apocalypse, look in vain for a mercy-seat, because smoke has filled the temple, "from the glory of Lord, and from the presence of his power."

Then the majesty of God, and the terrible God, and the righteous judgment of God against and the everlasting ruin of unsaved souls, and the that is never quenched, and the worm that neve

will be felt and owned to be realities. There will be that then, when too late, which, if only there were now when it is not too late, might produce such blessed results. Oh ! it is so grievous that men shut their eyes to the glory of the Lord and his power, when they might, if only they knew their need of it, find refuge in the secret of God's tabernacle ; and instead of doing so at once wait till the temple shall be filled with smoke, and no man be able to enter in any more.

For it will not then be a false impression of danger. "No man was able to enter into the temple till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled." These plagues are plagues on ungodly Christendom. They are followed by the millennial kingdom, a new dispensation altogether, with which we shall have nothing to do except, as saved believers, to reign over it with Christ. I cannot pretend to enter with any minuteness upon the interpretation of those vials. Their fulfilment is doubtless figurative, like the rest of the book. It appears to me highly probable, as already stated, that the events to which they are often supposed to refer do in reality, as is so often the case in prophecy as in history, foreshadow them. I think the localities of the plagues are fixed, and that the whole series, ending with the destruction of the beast and his army, includes the utter extirpation of Christ's enemies ; and that it is while these plagues are in the course of accomplishment he will come like the lightning in the clouds of heaven, and translate his Church, who have been waiting for him, in the certain expectation of his speedy advent, from that moment when at midnight the cry was heard—when, at the time of their deepest tribulation, they learned that the Bridegroom was at hand.

Now it does appear that, during this period of the Church's expectation, no man will be able to enter the temple. There will be no conversions at all, but these words will receive their fulfilment: "The time is at hand. He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." And in that fearful period of suspense, that blessed period of waiting, while those who have passed through the great tribulation of the Church are looking and watching for Him with girded loins and burning lamps, amidst desolations which cannot hurt them; and the rest are hopeless—the time for seeking salvation past, the temple filled with smoke from the glory of the Lord and his power—what will you think, if you are in the number of those unsaved ones, of the time which now is, when you might have been saved and would not?

Should my interpretation be correct, the case stands thus:—A great tribulation, as we have seen in a former chapter, is coming on the Church, intense in severity, but to last for the definite period of three years and a-half. It may come with scarcely a note of preparation. The present aspect of things in the world, and especially in the Holy Land and at Rome, is precisely that to be expected immediately before it. During that three years and a-half of the Church's midnight, a change will take place in God's dealings with the unconverted—the day of grace close—the times of the Gentiles terminate; and, though the Son of Man will not immediately appear, nothing will remain for the

ungodly—or, at all events, for those who resemble the foolish virgins in professing to be Christ's, and not having oil, but a “fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation.” I do not agree with those who think that the actual coming of the Son of Man may be looked for at any moment; but I think that there is great reason for believing that a very short time indeed may make salvation impossible. The hour of the Church's sorest suffering is not, humanly speaking, a likely season for coming to Jesus. And it seems that before the last vials of God's wrath are poured upon the world, no man will be able to enter his temple. Whether there are open Bibles and open churches or not, there will be no open mercy-seat for those who have not entered in before.

How different is it now! Never was there a time when the mercy-seat seemed so open—when God seemed so near—when prayer seemed so blest.

There is a throne of grace ever open now, where the worst sinner may find mercy. Men of all characters have found salvation there. It is the deep conviction of my heart that, at this moment, there is so wonderful a readiness on God's part to welcome sinners, so earnest a pressing on them to come in, so remarkable a gathering of one and another from this family and that, so longing a desire on the part of so many for the salvation of some, as to mark the end approaching. I think those whom God has saved lately in many lands, or is saving now, may feel themselves in an especial manner saved as by fire, caught in haste from a ship in flames, from which, ere long, escape will be impossible. Oh! how, under such circumstances, the father would clasp his child, and hurry with him into safety. So has the

heavenly Father been doing to these. And now, even now, are there not precious souls over whom he is yearning with affection? Is not his heart all full of love longing over them? Perhaps while you read this page your heart may be melting within you. Mingled thoughts are rushing through your mind, and urging you to flee from the wrath to come; perhaps you have sinned so deeply that you fear you can never be forgiven; perhaps you have so wrapped up yourself in self-righteousness that you fear you cannot be received; perhaps you have trifled with convictions so long that you are dreading lest the day of grace should have already passed from you. No, not so. There is still mercy for the sinner. Still there is access to a throne of grace; still the blood of Christ cleanses from all sin; still his intercession, like incense, fills the holiest with fragrance, and gives the sinner confidence to approach to God by Him. You need not, and must not, wait any longer. All things are hurrying rapidly along. The great clock of eternity is on the strike. The last sands of the hour-glass of heaven are falling. The seventh trumpet trembles in the angel's hand, as he is about to blow. And you, poor wanderer, who, openly or secretly, have wandered so long and so far—you, who have served the devil so many years so faithfully—you, who have followed your own will and pleased yourself for a lifetime—you, who have pursued the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life—you, the worst of all, who have thought yourself too good to need a Saviour—you, who are longing at this moment for safety, for life, for grace—you, my brother, or you, my sister, who cannot bear the thought

of being too late to enter in, come now, before you close this book, and learn the blessedness of entrance to the holiest by the blood of Jesus—by a new, and living, and blood-sprinkled way—and know for yourself what it is to be welcomed by Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER XII.

THE LIGHTNING APPEARANCE.

THE advent of Christ is the pole-star of prophecy. We have been examining the last conflicts of the Church, and it is natural now to turn to the coming of her Lord. When that will be we know not. No date is given for it, and even if we could make sure that we knew the true termination of the 1260 years, it would only give us the time of midnight and not the morning watch, in which the Son of Man cometh.

We saw, indeed, in an earlier chapter, that at midnight the cry would be made, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him." We saw reason to think that from that moment it would be too late to buy oil. But that even then a period would elapse of patient expectation on the part of the wise virgins, who would stand with burning lamps ready to join him when he came.

Our Lord has given us a vivid sketch of events accompanying his advent, in the seventeenth chapter of Luke, which we shall now consider. The words were spoken to his disciples, and contain a description of one particular phase of history, from his first coming to his second coming. The Pharisees had asked him when the kingdom of God should come. He answered them "the kingdom of God cometh not with observation."

"With outward show," says the margin. But the text is the correct rendering of the original, and the meaning of it is shown in what follows. "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation, neither shall they say, Lo ! here, or lo ! there." Now, if we look a little further down, we shall find this same expression repeated—"They shall say to you, See here, or See there : go not after them nor follow them. For as the lightning that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven shineth unto the other part under heaven, so shall also the Son of Man be in his day." He shall be seen without going to look for him ; and our Lord's assertion, in the former verse, must be understood in the same sense, whether in reference to the kingdom without, or the kingdom within, that when it really came, it would not require searching for. It cometh not with observation, but is plain and obvious not to be sought for here and there, but seen in the one case by the bodily eye, and in the other by the men's own consciousness.

He pointed out to the Pharisees the necessity of a kingdom of God within them. This was the essential thing for them. The coming of his kingdom of glory would do them no good, unless they were sharers in the kingdom of grace. But though this was the only thing which at present concerned the Pharisees, it was not the only thing which was important to the disciples. Indeed, they had it. The kingdom of God was set up in their hearts. This is the case with all disciples. There is a story related of the martyr Ignatius, in the earliest age succeeding the Apostles, that when he was brought before the Emperor Trajan and asked his name, he said it was Theophorus, that is God-bearer, and gave as an explanation, that he carried Christ in his heart ;

on which the emperor commanded the man who bore the crucified one in his heart to be given to the beasts. Every true disciple is a Theophorus, a Christ-bearer. Christ does sit and reign on the inward throne. The disciples had the kingdom within. In that sense the kingdom had already come to them. But there was another sense in which it was yet future. This was truth important to them, though not as yet to the Pharisee. And Jesus having answered the Pharisees' question in a way suitable to them, proceeded to answer it in a way suitable to the disciples. "He said unto the disciples, The days will come when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and ye shall not see it. And they shall say unto you, See here; see there; go not after them, nor follow them. For as the lightning that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven shineth unto the other part under heaven, so shall also the Son of Man be in his day."

"One of the days of the Son of Man" is a remarkable expression. It shows that there is more than one day which may be so called. A day of the Son of Man is a day when the Son of Man is revealed. In his divine nature, Christ is always present with his people. In his human nature, Christ was with his disciples when he spake these words; is not with his disciples now; will be with his disciples when he comes again to receive them unto himself. And in this last event there is more than one day included. There is the day of his appearing in the cloud, when his people will be caught up to meet him. There is the day of his coming to earth when his feet shall stand upon the Mount of Olives. There is the day of his sitting on the great white throne, before which heaven and earth shall flee away, and no place be

found for them. Each of these is a day of the Son of Man. Each is a day of his manifestation, and his coming into more immediate connection with the things around. These days of the Son of Man are the great landmarks of time. They are the points around which everything else circulates ; and our Lord foretold of other days in which the want of one of them should be felt. "The days will come that ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man."

Ever since Christ's ascension, this has been the desire of the Church. Each believer has, more or less, been longing to see one of the days of the Son of Man. To a certain extent this hope has been dimmed in many minds by long delay. Still, even this only shows more the meaning of our Lord's prediction. Some of his disciples looked back to the days of his flesh, when he was with them upon earth ; and others of them looked forward to the days of his future coming in the clouds of heaven. All of them looked more or less to both ; they longed once more to see him. And still this desire burns in the hearts of his people ; it is becoming stronger and stronger. In these last days there has been a most decided revival of expectation of this glorious advent. Those whose hearts are touched by the power of the Holy Ghost are longing as perhaps never before since the apostolic age, for the manifestation of Christ from heaven. One after another is joining in the prayer, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly." It is cheering to dying saints and those whom they leave behind, to think that the time of reunion may not be far distant. Oh ! how blessed a hope to see him as he is, and to be altogether like him, and to meet with all who are partakers of the same salvation, and dwell with them for ever.

One who is not a believer cannot really desire to see that day. Christ's presence is of necessity pleasant only to his people. He cannot be welcome to others ; but to his people it will be unspeakably joyful, and it is strange that any of them should fail to desire it. If you cannot think of that coming with joy, pray that you may be enabled to do so. To pardoned, justified, accepted sinners he comes only to bless ; he comes bringing with him joy and happiness unspeakable, and when the heart is oppressed with conflict, and longing for deliverance, how cheering is the thought that he is coming, how deep the groaning, how fervent the desire for one of the days of the Son of Man, for the day of the manifestation of the sons of God, for the adoption, even the redemption of the body.

There is temptation to the Church in consequence of hope deferred. "Ye shall not see it, and they shall say to you, See here, or See there ; go not after them, nor follow them." The disciples did not understand these words, "Ye shall not see it." Perhaps they were not intended fully to understand them, lest it should diminish their watchfulness ; but they did not see it. They waited for the advent, and it did not come.

Out of this circumstance temptation arose. The whole Romish apostasy was, in fact, a temptation springing out of Christ's absence.

Christ is personally in his bodily presence in heaven, and the Church of Rome points to each of her altars, and pretends that he is present there under the form of bread and wine. She says, "See here, and see there."

Christ's reign over earth is yet future, and the Pope has claimed to wield that sceptre which belongs alone to

him, and instead of looking for the days of the Son of Man, has said that he has now what in reality Christ will bring hereafter, and drawn men from the future to the present, by "See here, or see there."

Others have been ready to point to advances in science and civilization, and philanthropic efforts of various kinds, as if they were to constitute that final period of blessedness which Christ himself is coming to inaugurate. There has been too much disposition to attribute to enterprises of Christian love this character, and to expect Christ to come, as they say, spiritually; that is, in a sort of insensible transition from darkness to light, instead of personally in his own manifested glory. And sometimes, when God has been working very graciously, this has just been the result, that they have said that this was the expectation of the Church. How great a mistake! This is to substitute something else for Christ himself. We have promise after promise of his coming; but, through hope deferred, some of his people seem to have ceased to expect him, and been ready to see in other events the fulfilment of his promise, and to say, "See here, or see there."

And it is likely enough that what has been the temptation, more or less, all along, to substitute something else for Christ's delayed coming, will be so yet more plainly in these last days. It is not unlikely that just as the end is approaching, this tendency will exhibit itself more manifestly. We need not attempt to enter into details. Jesus said to the Jewish people, "I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not; if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive." This may have been fulfilled partially in the time of the Emperor Adrian, when the Jews did

receive a man called Barchochebas as their Messiah, were miserably destroyed by the Romans. But it ~~se~~ yet to await a final fulfilment. "There shall be false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders to deceive, if it were possible, even the elect," has been partially but not fully accomplished. We have seen reason for thinking that the antichristian power is preparing for a new development more powerful and more beguiling than any hitherto witnessed. doubt not we are very near the period when the Son of Man will himself come; and that this very fact will stimulate the enemy to fresh exertions. That temptation to see Christ in some worldly or devilish system imitating him in some points will, I think, be more apparent and more seductive. The temporal power of the Papacy trembles, it is my belief that it will fall; but that may then be said to the churches of the saints, as it was said of old to the holy land, "Rejoice not because the rod of him that smote thee is broken, for out of the scorpio egg shall come forth a basilisk, and his fruit shall be a fiery flying serpent." How important is it for Christian men to be on their guard. Error will present itself with a magnificence and boldness never known before there will be a final development of Antichrist; false miracles will be worked in attestation of his claim they will seek to turn men from him that lived and was dead, to some plausible system which will, even among the elect, be attractive—an union of all Christendom in claim for it divine sanction, speak of it as the reign of Christ, and say with lying lips, "See here, or there."

"Go not after them, nor follow them." It may seem now almost useless to give this warning. Jes-

gave it eighteen centuries ago. It may be too late to give it when the predicted evil has arrived. And it may be coming more rapidly than any of us suppose. If it should be so, it may not be in vain to have sounded a note of warning. How earnestly should each believer seek for special grace at special times; and if a cloud is coming over us of dark and deep apostasy, if there is fearful danger of being deceived, if our present joyful season is but God's season of refreshing before Satan's last effort, then what reason have we for attending to the words of Jesus, and writing them in our hearts: "They shall say unto you, See here, or see there; go not after them, nor follow them."

And if it be so that times are at hand when it shall be difficult even for God's children to avoid being deceived, how certain will those who are not God's children be to follow in the wake of popular apostasy. Certainly, my own impression is, that at the present moment those words, "Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation," have an unusual signification. God never does anything without purpose; and if we find him, as it were, stepping out of his place and drawing numbers into safety by what seems to some a hurried process, may we not conclude that the time is short, and that, as before his first advent, John the Baptist was enabled to make an impression on multitudes together, it is an altogether similar process which is taking place previous to his second advent; and that ere long will come both the temptation and the deliverance.

It is the first of these thoughts which I want to press upon the hearts of those of my readers as yet

unsaved. It is a fearful thing to put salvation off. It is a fearful thing not to attend to the things which belong to our peace, while God is waiting to be gracious; lest a time should come when the wrong shall seem to be right; when evil shall be called good, and bitter shall be called sweet; and when those not illuminated by the Spirit shall be surely and certainly deceived. Oh! that you would so look to Jesus now, that when they shall say, "See here, or see there," you may be able at once to discern the fraud, and go not after them, nor follow them.

"As the lightning that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth even to the other part under heaven, so shall also the Son of Man be in his day."

This day of the Son of Man is the day when he comes to take his people to himself. A comparison of many passages in Scripture makes it quite clear that he will first appear in the clouds to gather his people, before he comes with his people to destroy his enemies. The appearance in the clouds is described in 1 Thessalonians iv.; and his coming in flaming fire, taking vengeance, in 2 Thessalonians i. It is the distinction between coming for his saints, and coming with his saints. We are now considering the former.

He will come in brightness. The comparison to lightning plainly signifies this. At his first advent, he came in great humility; but at his second advent it will be with all the brightness of lightning. The Jews found it difficult to believe that he would come in lowness. Many Christians find it difficult to believe that he is really coming in glory. Yet the one proved true, and so will the other. When he comes again, all the brightest things will be pale in comparison

with him. As it was on the mount of transfiguration—as it was when Jesus appeared to Saul in the way, in a brightness which struck him to the earth—as it was when John saw him in Patmos, in vision, with a face as bright as the sun ; so, when he appears in the cloud, will he be like lightning. At present we see him not. We have to live by faith ; but then we shall see him—these eyes shall behold him. How infinite, then, the grief of having been taken up with earthly things, and forgotten him, disbelieved in him—when that sight is seen—when the sign of the Son of Man appears—when he is seen coming in the clouds with power and great glory.

He will be seen by all. This is the meaning of the comparison to the “lightning which lighteneth from one part under heaven, and shineth even to the other part under heaven.” The same thing is elsewhere said expressly, “Every eye shall see him.” It is not that which we shall have to go to see. It will be seen by us most plainly, and seen by all. When Christ came the first time, there was a possibility of making a mistake. One had to tell another where he was. It was necessary that the angels should tell the shepherds, and the wise men from the East should ask at Jerusalem where he was that was born King of the Jews. But when he appears in the cloud, he will be manifest to all. There will be no possibility of denial or cavil. From east to west he will be seen distinctly. All will alike be looking at him. “And then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, when they see the Son of Man coming in the clouds, with power and great glory.” Some are now shutting their eyes to his glory. They will not think of him—try to banish the thought of

him from their minds. But at that moment when, like lightning, he shineth from the one part under heaven, even to the other part under heaven, with their will, or against their will, all must look at him, all must think of him. How different the thoughts of some from those of others. Some will look at him with bright, beaming, joyful countenances; and others will find their knees trembling, their joints loosened, and be constrained to fall down in hopelessness.

He will appear suddenly. This also is shown by the comparison to the lightning. And St. Paul dwells on the same fact: "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." There does, indeed, appear to be an interval between the raising of the sleeping saints, and the changing of the living saints. That expression, "The dead in Christ shall rise first," seems to imply, though it does not assert, such an interval. But we are not concerned with that just now. The appearance is altogether sudden. Though long predicted, and long waited for, it will take the world by surprise. All things, up to that moment, will remain as they are. The world will be going on as usual. That lightning flash of the Son of Man will burst across men asleep. Most things take long to develope themselves. Christ himself came the first time in infancy, in childhood, in boyhood, in manhood. But this second time he will come in all his brightness, in the twinkling of an eye. Some put off coming to Christ in hope that in the decline of life, while consciously drawing nearer and nearer to death, they may have time gradually to come to Jesus. But when Jesus

comes, he comes suddenly, and without preparation. We shall look up, and see him there. Again and again does he speak of this unexpectedness of his coming. He speaks of himself as coming like a thief in the night. What a wonderful sight will that be, when he bursts all at once on the world so suddenly, and with a brightness above the brightness of the sun, dazzling every eye.

His appearance will be transitory. This also is implied in the comparison to lightning. It flashes from east to west, and vanishes. Just as when "the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall be raised; we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air." And then, it seems, Christ, having gathered his own, comes no further. He came to reap; and, having reaped, he carries back the sheaves into the garner.

Many passages of Scripture confirm this view of Christ's first appearance in the clouds, to gather his people, being not only sudden, but transitory. But we shall find it meeting us again.

This is unlike what many are looking for. But if it be what Scripture teaches us to anticipate, how startling an expectation. He is coming like a flash of lightning to gather his saints, like Enoch or like Elijah, who went up in a chariot into heaven. Sometimes Christ's people now are despised and little thought of, but then they will be owned by him, and drawn up to him like steel filings to a magnet, and in an instant set free from all the sins, infirmities, ignorances, pains,

and sorrows of this life below, enter on their eternal glory, and begin to dwell with Christ. It is difficult to conceive how the world will feel after this rapture of the Church. How did they feel when Enoch was translated that he should not see death? However they felt, they plunged into deeper apostasy. And so it will be then. And how will the risen and changed saints feel? We cannot imagine now. We must wait till we experience that glorious transformation. But this we know, that it will exceed infinitely all our thoughts. "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection."

This sudden, lightning-like appearance of the Son of Man in the clouds of heaven, to gather his saints, ought to exercise a wonderful influence on God's children.

I do not enter at all on the question when it is to take place. I believe the moment when it will cross earth's history is left very indefinite, purposely doubtful, that we may be always watchful. But, come when it may, it cannot be far distant. The thought of it ought to pervade everything. We should much more distinctly recognize the fact than any of us do. And then what manner of conversation ought theirs to be who are expecting such things? Sure I am of this, that if our spirit, and tone, and words, and actions, corresponded with our hopes, we should show forth the praise of Christ as we have never shown them forth yet. We must come closer to him ourselves if we are to bring others to the Saviour. We want more manifest resemblance to him, if we are to attract those that are without. We must show more plainly the strength and reality of our own anticipations if we

are to lead others to desire to share them. This is, perhaps, the most essential matter at the present moment, that Christ's people should really and evidently make ready for his advent.

We need a more watchful spirit. It is so easy to sleep, so difficult to wake. There must be unremitting watchfulness, or our feet are sure to slip. How many ways of honouring Christ we miss, into how many ways of dishonouring him we fall, through want of watching. We must remember how quickly he will come, how suddenly he may come. Whatever would unfit us for his coming must be cast aside. It is not our business—it is not our various duties—it is not the circumstances which surround us. It is our sins, our slothfulness, our coldness, our unbelief; these are the things which make us not ready. These we must put away. Against these we must be watching, lest, coming suddenly, he find us sleeping.

We need a more prayerful spirit. I am sure there is great need for this. Our prayers are apt to faint. God delays answers in order to stimulate prayer. And if Jesus is soon coming, the time for prayer will soon be over. We ought to be much in communion with him before he comes, that we may not feel his presence strange when he comes. If we knew that he was coming to-morrow, how earnestly should we pray to-day. And as there will be a day on the morrow of which he will come, each day should witness our fellowship with him. We should speak often one to another, but we should speak oftener to him. Surely there are larger blessings in his hands, to be got for asking, than we have ever obtained yet. Whatever we need to make us ready for his coming, he is ready

to bestow. We have but to desire what we need, and he is willing to supply it. Let us pray always that we may be accounted worthy to escape those things which shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.

We need a more trustful spirit. Hope in Christ's advent must be accompanied by present trust in him while yet unseen. We must not only trust him for salvation, but for everything which accompanies salvation; not only for salvation from sin's guilt, but for salvation also from sin's power. An unbelieving spirit does not become those who have already believed to life everlasting. I think that some distrust Jesus in the daily details of their Christian life, who do not doubt that its existence altogether is owing to him. This is a great mistake. We must trust him for everything. And when we think of him as about to come again in glory, brightly, quickly, suddenly, then we must also trust him. Never must we allow our hearts to feel afraid of his not taking care of us then. We must just commit it all to him, assured of this, that he is able and willing to keep us, and to "present us faultless before the presence of his glory, with exceeding joy."

But, lastly, how deep should be the impression on the mind of each unconverted one, resulting from this truth—Christ is coming like the lightning, you know not how soon, or how suddenly. He is coming to take away from your side that Christian friend who is now beseeching you to come to Jesus. You will find yourself one day alone without any but those, like yourself, strangers to the Saviour. The day of grace will have passed with that lightning-like appearance of the Son of Man. It will have been but a moment, but on that

moment will have hung eternity. Oh ! it will be vain, as the saints recede from view, ascending like their Master, with glorified bodies, to attempt to follow them. It cannot be. They go upward, and upward still, till they meet in the air him whom they have loved below, to part from him no more for ever. And then the lightning glory has passed—passed like a vision. And earth is still the same—the same, except that the voice of warning and the voice of invitation will be silent. It is not silent now. Now you are invited to the Saviour. Now you are besought to come to Jesus. Now you may be safe. Then, when the day of the Son of Man arrives, it will be a day of brightness ; and Christ, made yours to-day, will call you his for ever.

CHAPTER XIII.

LAST APOSTASY OF THE JEWS.

We come back in this chapter from the crown to the cross—from Christ coming like the lightning in the clouds of heaven, to Christ coming in great humility to suffer, bleed, and die; and there is no place so dear to the Christian as the foot of the cross. Never can we do without the sprinkling of the blood.

“Sweet the moments, rich in blessing,
Which before the cross I spend;
Light and life and peace possessing,
From the sinner’s dying Friend.”

Where is the believer whose heart does not vibrate in unison with that note? And though it is pleasant to think of the glorious advent, and to anticipate the manifestation of the sons of God, never, never can we rise above the necessity of the sprinkled blood. From first to last that must be our hope, and the Christian life then soars highest when it sinks the lowest in the fountain open for sin and for uncleanness.

Order is characteristic of all God’s works, and a large proportion of human mistakes about divine things, arises from not attending to it. It is very common to speak of the mistaken views of the disciples respecting Christ’s kingdom. Their chief error was one of order—they looked for the crown before the cross, and lost

sight of what Jesus said of himself: "But first must he suffer many stings." They forgot the word "first." It is so sometimes in our Christian life. Much of error arises from forgetting the word "first." God had foretold much about the coming of Christ by the mouth of his holy prophets. They testified beforehand of the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow, and the disciples, and the Jews generally, understood, in a degree, the second, but forgot the first. We cannot be too thankful that God did not forget it. For important and delightful as the second is to the Christian, had it not been for the first, there could have been no Christian to take delight in it. There can be no glory without humiliation. Sin must be atoned for before there can be any salvation. And while we look forward to a coming day when the Son of Man shall be revealed in his brightness, that hope we could never have had—it would have been delusion to cherish it—had he not suffered first. "First must he suffer many things, and be rejected of his generation."

We must not limit the sufferings here spoken of to the sufferings on the cross. These were penal, the punishment of our sins; but there were other sorrows besides. His life was a life of sorrow. From infancy to death he was always more or less suffering. He was emphatically a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. This experience of suffering answered a twofold purpose—it fitted him to be a sympathizing Saviour, a tender brother, able to be touched with the feeling of infirmities—and it enabled him to make atonement for our sins; thus in both ways giving meaning to that text, "It became him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory.

to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings."

The sufferings of Christ were of various kinds—bodily, mental, and spiritual. He suffered in every part of our nature. Bodily suffering was borne by him at the cross. It is a mistake to think of this as in any way diminished by his possessing a divine nature. The manhood was by that made capable of endurance. Its susceptibilities were increased. He was able to feel even bodily pain with an intensity of which we can have no conception. He bore bodily pain in atoning for sin, because we have sinned in every part of our nature, and therefore atonement must in every part of our nature be made. The twenty-second Psalm, which is prophetic of the sufferings of Christ, very much dwells on these: "I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax, it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death. For dogs have compassed me, the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me; they pierced my hands and my feet. I may tell all my bones." Such were the words put into Christ's mouth in prophecy so long before, and they bring the bodily sufferings very prominently forward.

Besides the most important purpose fulfilled in this bodily suffering of making atonement, there is great comfort in the thought to the bodily sufferer. There is a hard stoicism which would represent bodily suffering as below the consideration of a man, and pretend to rise altogether above it; but this meets with no countenance from the Man of Sorrows. As of every other grief, so of this, he drank to the very dregs. And hence even in

bodily pain the believer is not alone. Christ has felt even that. There is many a Christian to whom days of anguish and nights of weariness are appointed. He who can make no mistake sends them. They bring with them their own peculiar message. But here is their comfort—this it is which supports a man under it—at all events, this is fitted to be a great source of consolation; it is the path which was trodden by the Captain of our salvation. He has suffered in body. The nails pierced him, the stripes wounded him. He felt as mere man never can feel what this body is capable of enduring, and therefore he sympathizes with these smaller troubles. He does not treat them as unimportant; and there is many a lonely sufferer who is finding constant springs of secret strength in the compassion of him who knows how to pity because he knows bodily pain experimentally.

Man is not perfect without his body, and suffering would not be complete which was only mental. In this, as in everything else, the atonement is complete. There is wonderful exactness in its fulfilment of all penalties. No mental suffering would have stood in the place of bodily, there must be both to complete it. Jesus put himself altogether in our place, enduring in body, because we have bodies liable to suffer for sin, as he rose in body that our bodies likewise might rise again from the dead.

Mental sufferings were borne by him on the cross. His sufferings were not only bodily. In the garden of Gethsemane they were purely mental, yet how deep, how infinite. His whole life was filled up with mental suffering. We know how the capacity for this depends upon the mind itself. Some minds suffer little because

of a certain obtuseness which prevents them from feeling pain. Like an ear insensible to music, they never are conscious of the want of harmony. The mind of Christ was in perfect tune—perfectly susceptible to every vibration—to joy and to sorrow, to an extent of which we can form no conception. A multitude of circumstances constantly arose to cause him grief. He was surrounded by everything which was unfitted for the presence of perfect purity. Sometimes he witnessed afflictions from which those who bore them would not be relieved. Sometimes he saw contention among those who were yet his beloved disciples. Sometimes his human mind craved sympathy and did not find it. And when the hour of his last sufferings came, how impossible it is to measure or conceive what his mental strugglings were. There was a limitation of his human mind—this was necessary to his perfect manhood, and, inconceivable as the fact is to us, is plainly shown in that expression of his about the time of his second advent, “Of that day knoweth no man; no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.” This limitation of his human mind, which, in some way inconceivable to us, was not swallowed up by his divine knowledge, but co-existed with it, must have exposed him to constant mental grief. It would seem that as man he could not trace out distinctly all the reasons of God’s dealings. His human knowledge was confined within the created sphere, and was therefore liable to feeling itself imprisoned. This is all implied in that one expression, “If it be possible.” He did not know as man whether it was possible for him to be spared that cross or not. Had he known it to be impossible he would have been spared part of that agony. The same

thing appears in that "Why hast thou forsaken me?" He did not fully, as man, at the moment, see why it might not have been otherwise. Here again was an inlet to mental suffering. It is of no consequence that we see all this as in a mist. The full understanding of anything relating to the divine and human natures is necessarily beyond us; but we see quite enough to teach us what an inlet to mental suffering there was in this direction; infinitely increased, no doubt, by the contrast between the limits in which his human mind was confined, and the illimitable reachings of his divine mind. At all events, of this we are sure, that in mind as well as in body, the Son of Man suffered many things.

But the spiritual sufferings were the most mysterious of all, the most important of all, and the most intolerable of all. It is difficult to separate between mental and spiritual. I mean by spiritual those arising from the weight of man's sin laid upon him. This taking upon him of human guilt was the main purpose of his advent. His bodily sufferings and mental agony on the cross were the result of it; but we see it also by itself. "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death." There was his expression of it when that cloud was just beginning to roll over him. It was the anguish of his soul, not so much in the anticipation of bodily suffering or under mental perplexity, but in the consciousness that what was coming was the wrath of God against sin. He was wrapping these sins of ours around him, that he might take them all away and wrap us in the perfect robe of his own righteousness. And then upon the cross, this was the suffering which really weighed him down. It was not the taunts of the multitude, nor the nails which fastened to the cross, nor those thousand

mental sorrows, each of which was a mountain. It was not these under which his soul sunk within him. It was the fact of being forsaken of his Father. This was punishment—it was an eternity of hell concentrated into a moment of time ; and though he questioned the reason, the fact he could not question—it was plain, palpable, unambiguous. “ My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ? ”

It is this fact upon which our salvation altogether hangs. This is the suffering without which no sinner could be saved. He must suffer it in his own person or in the person of another. God’s wrath against sin does not admit of being laid aside. It must find exercise, and every hope we have for time or eternity hangs simply upon this, that he has suffered in our stead.

The rejection of Christ is also predicted. “ First must he suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation.” A careful study of this clause is essential to the right understanding of it. The word “ generation ” has two meanings ; those living at the same time, or those belonging to the same race. Of this latter meaning we will take two examples : Psalm xii. 7—“ Thou shalt keep them, O Lord, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.” The words “ for ever ” plainly show that “ generation ” does not refer to those alive at one time. The other text is Phil. ii. 15, where the same word here translated “ generation ” is rendered “ nation.” This is also the meaning of the word in the prophecy, so similar to that we are now considering though not the same, uttered on the Mount of Olives—“ This generation or nation shall not pass away till all be fulfilled.”

The declaration, then, of our text is, that before the lightning-coming of the Son of Man, he must be re-

jected of that nation—the Jewish race. We are now in the Jewish line of prophecy.

This rejection has taken place by steps. At first the nation was disposed to welcome him—the common people heard him gladly—multitudes thronged his march on every occasion—they wanted to take him by force and make him a king.

The rulers and Pharisees rejected him, and were the means of putting him to death. They procured the assent of the people, but it was done in ignorance. So Peter expressly declared, “Now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers.” Yet they did reject him.

Still the gospel was sent first to the Jews. In each individual case the apostles addressed the Jews before the Gentiles. Many Jews were converted. At first the Church was altogether Jewish, and it long continued in great part so; but the admission of Gentiles embittered the Jewish mind against Christianity, and at last the whole nation rejected him, and so few were led to Christ, that to be a Jew was looked upon as synonymous with not being a Christian.

There are indications in prophecy that this rejection of Jesus by the Jews has not yet reached its last accomplishment. Our Lord uttered a prediction which I think still, as observed before, awaits its fulfilment—John v. 43: “I am come in my Father’s name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.” There is another in Isaiah lxvi. 1—8. Here the Jewish people are represented as building a temple, offering sacrifices disapproved by God, casting out their brethren who trembled at the Lord’s word, under pretence of zeal for God, and

suffering in consequence fearful tribulation, from which they are suddenly and miraculously delivered. Such a succession of events has never yet happened, and therefore cannot but be still future.

The same events are described, Zech. xi. 15—17; xii. Nothing has ever taken place yet corresponding to these events. There has never been a distinct false Messiah, enticing Judah to idolatry. Jerusalem has been besieged, but destroyed instead of being delivered. The nation that came against Jerusalem was not punished in consequence, nor was a spirit of grace and supplication poured out upon Judah.

Here we have a phase of Jewish apostasy which is to terminate in repentance and glory. An idol shepherd, an idolatrous Messiah, or rather a Messiah who is an idol, received, and then deliverance coming through the advent of the Lord. “Then shall the Lord go forth and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle; and his feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west.”* That all this is as yet unfilled is too plain to be denied; and it does appear both from Isaiah and Zechariah, as well as from other parts of Scripture, that it must be preceded by a last and worse rejection of Christ by the Jewish nation than has ever yet taken place. Hitherto they have rejected him in ignorance and in adversity, but next time it will perhaps be in knowledge and in prosperity. It will be in their own land when restored but not converted. Before Christ’s coming in glory, he must be rejected once more of that Jewish nation.

* Zech. xiv. 3, 4.

If this interpretation be correct, the first restoration of Judah will be perplexing to the Church. Instead of being the commencement of joy, it will usher in worse trouble than has ever been seen before. Those who think that all that is wanting to millennial blessedness is the planting the Jew in his own land, will find themselves thoroughly disappointed. The event will take place partially by human instrumentality, as a scheme of earthly policy; and the nation restored, instead of worshipping the Lord Jesus, will more decidedly than ever reject him. There is a day coming when all Israel shall be saved; but before that day arrives, restored Jews will inhabit restored Jerusalem; and once more, for the last time, the Son of Man will be rejected of the race. This will be very staggering to the faith of Christians; and it is well to know it beforehand, that we may not, when it comes to pass, be offended. He must first be rejected by that nation before he reigns —before he comes like lightning.

There was a necessity for Christ's suffering and rejection. "First must he suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation." The cross was a necessity —without it there could have been no salvation. The disciples expected a reigning Messiah, but thought not of a suffering Messiah. Had it been so, all their hopes would have been disappointed. Christ himself could not save without dying. Mere power, though almighty, was not sufficient to save the sinner; mere love, though infinite, was not sufficient to save the sinner; mere sympathy, precious though it be, was not sufficient to save the sinner. There must be atonement—there must be sacrifice. On this point, even with God himself, there is a "must." He must do what is right,

and it is not right that sin should go unpunished. yet even that "must" itself is but the constraint of love. It is love which made it necessary that Christ should suffer. Man might have perished, have fallen into merited destruction, like the angels for whom atonement has been made, and God's glory been bright and cloudless as ever. It was love which caused him to provide atonement. That wonderful love : it necessary that sinners should not be left without a way of escape. And oh ! who can tell how much was wrapped up in those short words, "First must he suffer many things."

There was a necessity also for his being rejected by that nation. It is referred by Peter to "the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God" (Acts ii. 23). Perhaps that text is in this particular point of view one of the most striking in the Bible, because it so beautifully states the two sides of the difficulty, one side of which men are generally so anxious to get rid of : "Him I delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and with wicked hands crucified and slain." God's foreknowledge did not excuse man's sin : it was through man's sin that the atonement was accomplished. So God overrules the will which he hates to the result which he loves.

His rejection by the Jews was also the door for the reception by the Gentiles. The Church of the Gentiles owed its existence, or at least its extension, to the apostasy of the Jews. The natural branches were broken off, that the Gentile branches might be grafted in. In this sense also, according to the plan laid down in the Divine Mind, it was needful that he should be rejected of the one, that he might be accepted of the other.

other. "As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief; even so have these also now not believed, that, through your mercy, they also may obtain mercy. For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all. Oh, the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things, to whom be glory for ever. Amen."*

There is a generation that accepts Christ. Such a generation is spoken of in the Psalms—"This is the generation of those that seek him." It is spoken of by Peter—"Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people." Though the Jews rejected him, and will, it seems, as a nation, yet once more reject him, there are those whom Christ is gathering out of every nation, and tongue, and people, to be his own.

The Jew is not alone in rejecting him. Even has he been rejected by the great mass. What Isaiah said has been all along verified: "Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? He is despised and rejected of men." It is but the few in any age, or any land, who have really welcomed

* Rom. xi. 28—36.

him as their Saviour. This will not be altered till he comes. Sometimes, as now, he draws souls more rapidly than at other times. Sometimes he produces a more general impression than at other times. But, notwithstanding this, it will be always found that, as by the Jewish race, so by every other race he will be more or less rejected. The Gentile branches, like the Jewish, will be broken off. And yet out of every nation God is gathering a generation of those that seek him. It is a blessed thought that he is doing so. He is doing so even now. They are distinguished by this feature, that they trust Christ, and love him. This separates them from others. It is the rejection or acceptance of Christ which makes all the difference. Whoever does not accept Christ as his Saviour, rejects him. And on this point hangs everything else. The light in which Christ is regarded is the distinguishing characteristic. Christ welcomes the worst sinners coming to him by faith. It is not sin, however great, that can really keep us from the Saviour. In the people he is forming for himself are found many who have been at the farthest possible distance. "Such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are justified, but ye are sanctified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." Jesus is willing to receive all who come to him; and the only reason why souls are not saved is this, that they reject him who alone can save them. It is a perilous thing to do so. Oh! how willing he is to welcome you among his people; how willing to call back each poor wanderer into his fold; how willing to make you one of his people, however far you have been from him hitherto. I beseech you not to put off any longer coming to him. Do not be satisfied any longer

ithout being numbered among his saved ones, lest it could be too late. Will you, can you reject him who is so willing to make you his?

Never let us forget that our first reception of Christ must be in his sufferings. He is describing the glories of his second advent; and it is in the midst of this description the words occur: "First must he suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation."

All doctrines rest upon these great facts; and, just as it was necessary that Christ should suffer first and reign afterwards, so must our first approach to him be at the cross, we must come to him as the suffering, dying Saviour, or we shall never reign with him in glory. And as it is true that we must, so is it true also that we may. Christ suffering for our sins is the first object to be presented before the eye of the inner. Forgiveness is the first need, the primary want of the soul. It is of no use to tell the convinced inner of Christ's glory when he comes again the second time; its only effect is to make him more hopeless. That which he needs to know is the one truth that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures. This was the first truth which Jesus made to be a truth by dying. This was the first doctrine delivered to St. Paul, and the first doctrine taught by him to others; and this is the first anchoring ground to which one made conscious of sin can fasten himself. There is everything in beginning at the right end. You must not attempt to improve yourself till you have obtained forgiveness. This is the one blessing you stand in need of, and without this nothing else is really valuable. Some will not go to Christ suffering on the cross for pardon, till they have

fitted themselves, as they think, for Christ's presence. Then they will never go at all. Christ suffered first because he would save the sinful; and since he suffered, the most sinful may obtain salvation. None is too sinful to be washed in his blood. His sufferings are of infinite worth; and every sinner, however guilty, who washes his sins away in the blood of Jesus, will have life through his name.

And then how much do we, who have received his giveness, owe him. To procure it for us he has suffered many things. Never can we understand the depth of his agony; but it is to this we owe every hope we possess. How he claims our love! Oh that he would fill our hearts with such a flood of holy fire that we might burn with intense and never-to-be-extinguished affection. We do love him, but we want to love him more. We want to feel his love like a fire in our bosom which cannot be restrained. May each deep sorrow of the Son of Man wake up within us this blessed flame that, thinking of his love, we may love, as never yet did him, who in love to us, has suffered many things.

CHAPTER XIV.

NOAH'S DAYS.

THE days of Noah were the most remarkable, in some respects, that have ever been witnessed in earth's history. They form the most complete break in it imaginable: so much so, that the world before the flood is called the old world, in opposition to the world that now is. It was the most thorough finishing up of a dispensation possible, when the whole human family, with the exception of a single household, were swept at once into destruction.

This event occupies a very large space in the Book of Genesis. The memory of it still survives in the traditions of all, or almost all nations. It was an event which shut off all the past from the present by an impassable gulph. And when we look back upon it, it seems like that which can never be repeated. Repeated in that particular form it never will be. The promise was distinct, that never again should all flesh be destroyed by the waters of a flood. And the bow in the cloud still constantly reminds us both of the deluge and the promise. It still shines as fresh and as bright as when Noah left the ark, and remains a continual memorial of this wonderful event in earth's history.

Jesus declared that this event would be found in

some respects analogous to that of his coming to take his saints to himself: "As it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all."

There are three distinct periods of comparison suggested in the passage: that before Noah entered the ark; that in which Noah entered the ark; and that after Noah had entered the ark. And these periods were of considerable duration. The first is indefinite, reaching back to the beginning of apostasy. The second is short, confined to the actual day in which Noah went in. The third includes the gradual rise of the waters, till the mountains were covered, and the last man lay beneath them. In each of these three periods, "as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man."

The period before Noah entered the ark is described in these words: "They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage."

We know something more about the state of things before the flood than is here stated; and I think we must understand our Lord's words as referring to the whole history, and asserting a similarity between the state of things before the flood, and the state of things before Christ's appearing. The history of the world immediately before the flood is a short one, but it is an impressive one. We can distinctly read in it the following features:—

First, a great advance in knowledge and civilization. The whole family of Cain, in which this chiefly

was found, was swept away from the face of the earth ; not one remained to instruct his posterity in those arts which formed men's pride in those early days. The knowledge of them was therefore in great measure lost. But it was the fact, that immediately before the flood, agriculture, the mechanical arts, and music had attained their perfection. We do not know how many of our modern inventions may not have been anticipated. A flood sweeping over us now, and destroying all our artificers, designers, men of science and skill, would destroy with them all remembrance of our discoveries, at least in their practical use. There was nothing in itself wrong in scientific agriculture, in skilfully working metals, in handling the pipe and the organ. But the men engaged in these works were endeavouring to shut God out of his own world. By these, in themselves, useful arts, their minds seem to have been occupied ; and they began to think themselves able to mould everything according to their will. Human reason, human skill, and human power, were conspicuous, and the men of that age idolized them. There were reasons, especially the greater length of life, which almost certainly made an advance in knowledge and refinement more rapid than it ever has been yet. And the impression which the short record in Genesis gives us is, that till the present time, if even now, the progress then attained has never been regained. There is nothing to imply that any miraculous aid was afforded to Noah in building the ark. It was not among the children of Seth that the arts were chiefly cultivated ; and yet the ark was as large and as difficult to build as the Great Eastern. I am inclined to believe that, as far as knowledge goes, we of the present day should

find ourselves more at home with Noah's antediluvian contemporaries, than with any of the generations following.

Secondly, an equal advance in sin and ungodliness. We have very strong expressions on this subject, but not stronger than we find used after the flood. Man's heart before the flood and after the flood was very much the same. But before the flood there was greater power, and therefore the evil exhibited itself more prominently. Fraud, violence, lust, contempt of God are the prominent features in Genesis. It was not found that an increase of knowledge was accompanied by an increase of godliness. Rather the contrary. It seems, that, with increasing civilization, there was, in some respects, an increasing alienation from God. Nor did that union of the godly with the ungodly, which took place when the sons of God took wives of the daughters of men, improve the latter, while it corrupted the former. It brought all to the same low level. It was an age in which old distinctions were broken down. Under the pretence of greater liberality of sentiment, or some other equally futile pretext, there was a fusing together of elements which ought to have been kept separate; and all sank rapidly into the uniformity of ungodliness. We have no distinct information as to the steps by which this was accomplished. Only one step is mentioned; that of the increased intercourse between the godly and the ungodly. But, whatever were the steps in Noah's day, he himself alone was found faithful. The degeneracy must have been great indeed, accompanied, we may well suppose, with persecution. And perhaps in that way, or in other ways, many like Methuselah, who died immedi-

ately before the deluge, may have been taken away from the evil to come.

Thirdly, it was a period of warning. God did not leave that antediluvian world without warning. Noah, we are told, was a preacher of righteousness. The warnings given to Noah were certainly not for himself alone, but meant for him to communicate to others. Between the first warning given to him, and the commencement of the building the ark, at least twenty years intervened.* Those twenty years may have been taken up in preaching. I apprehend Noah and his preaching became an object of ridicule to the whole world that then was. It seemed to them that what had been so long must still be—that it was idle to talk of coming desolation, while all was smiling and prosperous. And yet they must have listened. And who shall tell how many of them believed, and were removed to glory before the flood came. At all events, dark as, in some respects, the period was, there was at least this light in it—the faithful, honest preaching of Noah. And we may be sure of this, that however much Noah may have been openly ridiculed, there was a voice in those men's consciences—God's Spirit did strive with them, and testify within them to the truth and importance of his message.

“As it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man.”

The increase of knowledge is foretold by Daniel : “Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be

* This appears by comparing Gen. vi. 8, which gives the date of the first warning, with verse 13, which shows that the command to build the ark was given after the birth of Noah's sons, which took place 100 years before the flood, Gen. v. 32, and vii. 6.

increased." The increase of wickedness is foretold by Paul : " This know also, that in the last days, perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own-selves, covetous, proud, boasters, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy." And it is not likely that God, who is rich in mercy, and who sent so many warnings to those who lived before the flood, will not do so to those who live before the days of the Son of Man.

Such, at all events, is the history of our own days. The increase of knowledge is the boast of the age. It has been an epoch of great discoveries and great inventions. The prediction of Daniel has met with a fulfilment more literal and exact than could possibly have been anticipated. Many do run to and fro. The whole world is put in motion ; and there is an advance in knowledge which leaves former ages far behind. This, in itself, is neither right nor wrong. That depends upon the use made of it. But as a sign of the times it is most striking. It is one of those analogies with the days before the flood to which our Lord refers and which will appear more close the more they are examined. There is a constant disposition to put increase of knowledge in the place of an increase of godliness, as the real instrument of reformation. A particular lesson which we learn from the correspondence between the world before the deluge and the world after it, in this point, is the utter powerlessness of civilization, refinement, social advance to counteract the evil of the heart. It only gives added power to the evil and the good. It has no purifying efficacy ever. Progress was greatest just before the flood. The progress of the nineteenth century may be thus told as accompanying the last times.'

There is, in some respects, a great increase of wickedness. London is full of evil. This country is full of evil. And surely the other countries of Europe are very full of evil. Over many of them there is a deeper cloud settling down. Never was there a time when Satan was more busy in marshalling his forces for the last conflict. And in nothing is his presence more shown than in the effort to join together the Church and the world. He tries in every way to persuade the sons of God to ally themselves with the daughters of men. I do not refer especially to marriages between those who are believers and those who are not—bad as those are—but to the general tone of large portions of those who call themselves Christ's, and yet are constantly found acting with those who are not Christ's. This blending together of God's people with others, under pretence of liberality of sentiment, is one of the most alarming symptoms. It is more dangerous than opposition. It has a sure tendency to bring about a state of things like that before the flood. When Christians cease to protest against surrounding evil—when they suffer themselves to be entangled in compromise—when there is no longer any visible difference between those who serve God, and those who serve him not, then it is that evil is at hand. That is the spirit which ripens into apostasy. Then the barriers are done away, the floodgates are open, and no one can tell where the evil will be stayed. I am sure that to some this is a great temptation now. Some find it very difficult to withstand the charge of illiberal precision which is brought so often against the consistent Christian. But it must be borne. God does not love this union with the world now better than he did.

before the flood. The two cannot be united. Still is the command clear and distinct: "Come out from among them, and be ye separate; and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you; and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." This, I am persuaded, is now a very characteristic feature—the attempt to mix up all things in one, and remove that separating barrier which God himself has drawn.

But, on the other hand, God is himself, as before the flood, giving warnings. If Satan is using every effort to break down the line of separation between the Church and the world, God is himself drawing it much more clearly and decisively. He is marking his own with a clearness never known before. The separation which Satan succeeds in destroying is by that very success proved to have been a false one. And God is drawing his own line. He is showing distinctly who his children are. He seals them with the seal of his Spirit—he marks them by a blessed unction from on high—he singles them out one by one, and prepares them, like Noah, for what is coming. Certainly God has sent warnings and messages of all kinds in these days. He has warned men of the absolute necessity of seeking him. The willingness of Christ to receive sinners has been set forth very distinctly; and while evil has abounded in a hundred different forms, souls have been also saved. God has been drawing a line, clear, distinct, and unambiguous; and gathering on one side of it all that are really his. And in this respect, the days of Noah greatly resemble our own.

We have no reason for thinking that this resemblance will diminish. "Evil men and seducers will wax worse and worse. Those tendencies to evil which make themselves so prominent will ripen into worse ungodliness. The false union of Satan's devising will exhibit itself in more direct antagonism to the truth. And this will, I believe, as before the flood, be the grand temptation addressed to the Church. I think the crowning point of apostasy will be the attempt to blend all together into one, and to annihilate the distinction which God has made. In this matter there is going on, even now, a conflict. On the one hand God is calling souls, separating them from others so plainly that all must take notice of it. On the other hand, every effort is made to persuade men of the impossibility of any such line of separation. This struggle will go on. The world will seem to triumph, as it did before the flood; and all who are not Christ's will be drawn into its stream. Less and less will there seem to be, what there never really is, any neutral ground. There will be union among all who love not Christ's truth. The apostasy of Rome and the apostasy of the East, and Pantheism, in its various forms, so popular now in all classes of the community, under various names, and worldliness, in its many phases, will all together form a Crystal Palace, a Vanity Fair, a Great Exhibition of all religions and none combined, which will embrace with open arms all that is false, and shut out from it nothing but the truth. Then it will be seen who are Christ's true disciples. They alone will be faithful; they only will stand the test; and they alone will suffer, while all besides are united in harmony—“Ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice.”

I am not insensible to the arguments brought forward by some, to prove that a portion of the Church will be removed from earth before the tribulation, and another portion left to pass through it. But, on the whole, they seem to me insufficient. There is tribulation for the Church, and tribulation for the world. I believe that three distinct last tribulations are spoken of—that of the Church, that of Judah, and that of the world. Our Lord's words, just quoted, were fulfilled in part at his resurrection, and will have a final accomplishment at his appearing in glory. "Ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice." The world's trouble and the Church's trouble never come together. "And ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come; but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. And ye now, likewise, have sorrow; but I will see you again, and your hearts shall rejoice; and your joy no man taketh from you." But how then, it is asked, if the whole Church is to pass through a great tribulation previous to the advent, how is it that our Lord has bidden us watch and pray always, that we may be accounted worthy to escape those things which are coming on the earth, and to stand before the Son of Man? We must observe and distinguish the things which are coming on the earth, and the afflictions coming on the Church. The world's tribulation will not commence till the Church's tribulation is over. The Church will be preserved in the world's tribulation from all suffering, like Israel in Egypt, or delivered out of it, like Noah in the ark, and probably first the one, then the other. It was so in the

days of Noah. It will be so in the days of the Son of Man.

The men of Noah's day had no expectation of the coming of the flood. They knew, indeed, that Noah expected it. The ark in building was a constant testimony to this effect. But they did not expect it. They laughed at the expectation. And up to the very day that Noah entered into the ark they did not believe that the flood would come at all. Everything went on as usual. "They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage," up to the very moment. Yet it is quite certain that the flood was a subject of conversation. It was not the carelessness of ignorance, but of unbelief. They knew not—not because they could not know, but because they would not know. And therefore they made no effort to escape—did not repent—did not build arks; but talked about it, and laughed about it, and heard Noah's sermons, and ridiculed the school of the prophets, from Enoch, the seventh from Adam, down to Noah himself. "The flood will never come. And Noah's ark, so long constructing, will always be as it is now, on dry land." Perhaps, when he first began to build, some anxious thoughts arose. But when year after year passed, and no deluge came, the anxiety would change into carelessness, and every lip curl when Noah's name was mentioned. Poor enthusiast! to be building an ark for a flood which will never come—which is physically impossible—which is contrary to all experience, while those great men, Jabal, Jubal, and Tubal Cain, are engaged so usefully in their new and grand discoveries in science and in art. So they went on, till the flood came and took them all away. It is just so now; and

will be so till the time of the end. Men eat and drink, marry, and are given in marriage; but who expects the Son of Man? Certainly not the unconverted. Too many Christians are forgetting his advent; but those not believers are not thinking of it at all—have no expectation of it whatever. They know that it is spoken of—that some preach about it; but as for expecting it themselves, it does not enter into one thought, or modify one plan. Would you but believe it, you could not be happy a moment longer. No one could be happy who expected the flood and had no ark. And you who have no safety, cannot be happy when you think of the coming of the Son of Man. What will you do then?

The day in which Noah entered the ark is the second period of time mentioned. The building of the ark took many years; the destruction of the world by the flood took many weeks; but a few hours were all that was required for Noah's entering the ark. In one day he and all who accompanied him entered the ark, and the Lord shut him in.

"As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man." Before destruction falls on the ungodly the Church will be safe. Everything will be going on in its regular order; the world enjoys peace and safety, and the Church in depression, perhaps under persecution, till the midnight cry is heard which announces the coming of the Son of Man. Then he will gather his own into safety. The risen saints and the rapt saints will be together caught up to meet the Lord in the air. "We which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall

descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God. And the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord." This gathering into the clouds of the whole Church, both those that sleep and those that wake, is for the same purpose as Noah being shut into the ark. Their tribulation is over. Now is come the time for the world to lament and for them to rejoice. They are safe with Jesus before the storm falls. They enter into his presence and dwell with him before his desolating vengeance descends on the earth. "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chamber, and shut thy doors about thee. Hide thyself, as it were, for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For behold the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity. The earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain."

How delightful to be safe in the ark. How infinitely more delightful to be hidden in God's pavilion, caught up to be with Jesus. We look forward to this glorious day. It may be sooner than we think. Long time was Noah waiting, till at last the day arrived; and one day Christ will come, and we shall be safe for ever with the Lord.

The third period is that after Noah had entered into the ark. The fountains of the great deep were broken up the same day that Noah entered into the ark. The Lord shut him in, and from that moment the fate of every man was sealed. There was no room then for repentance; but the destruction was not immediate—a

month and ten days elapsed before the water had enough to lift up the ark. All that time it is possible that some may have continued to laugh at Noah's. They saw the constant rain, and perceived a constant advancing tide ; but after a few days this would be thought of ; they would drown their fears in After a while some would have to leave their homes and ascend the slopes of the mountains, and then would long seem placed in safety. Not till months had passed would the last refuge begin to be dangerous, and despair take possession of every heart but the peculiarity of their position was its hopelessness. God had shut Noah in and shut them out. They saw the ark floating on the waters, but sure destruction awaited them. No doubt sin increased ; no doubt rebellion against God grew more rampant. The salt removed from the earth—Noah's faithful preaching heard no more. Mercy's voice was silenced, and not awaited them but death. What weeks and months were those when the ark was floating on the waves and the human race awaiting destruction ! “As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man.” The removal of the Church will be immediately followed by the destruction of the world. Whether a longer or shorter interval elapses, an interval there must be after the saints are caught up to meet the Lord in the air, before they come again with Jesus in flaming fire taking vengeance. Events are predicted which seem to come within this period : the Great tribulation—the mission of Elijah—the seventh or great tribulation of the world—the last gathering of the beast and his armies to make war with Christ on a white horse. But as far as the nations of Christians

are concerned, the characteristic feeling of the time will be its utter hopelessness. No more preaching of the Gospel—no more offers of grace—no more strivings of the Spirit—no more possibility of coming to Jesus; but dark hopeless despair and bold ungodliness, the day of grace passed, and all that is holy gone. What will earth be without one believer—when there is no conversion—no restraining influences—but man is left to himself to develop the evil that is in him? Then each will show himself as he is; that veil which hides the man from others and himself will be gone; and in a sense, and to a degree never known before, the wicked will do wickedly till the Son of Man returns and treads the winepress of God's wrath.

Such is the future of earth's history, and we are now in the first of these periods corresponding to that previous to Noah entering the ark. The ark was preparing—and now Christ is himself preparing a place for his people to be with him. Before his judgments fall upon the earth he is coming to take them to himself; not, as we have seen, before the tribulation of the Church, but before the tribulation of the world.* Our safety then will depend upon our being Christ's now. Christ is himself the ark. He cannot sink, and those who are safe in him cannot sink either. He will save them from the evil, and hide them in the secret of his pavilion.

I speak to the believer who is safe in Christ. Never must we forget that our only security is in him; we cannot keep ourselves; days of conflict are approaching

* Perhaps the time during which Noah was entering the ark corresponds to the interval between the midnight cry and the advent. It may have begun to rain on the last day, but Noah was not injured by it. Some vials may be poured out, but the Church is safe.

—they may be very near. The last storm which shall blow across the Church may be close at hand. Satan will do his worst when he knows that his time is short; and it is not when the world is disturbed, but when the world is at peace, that the Church's affliction will come. "They eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage," before the flood came; but Noah was not at rest. They did not leave him alone; surely he had much to suffer from the world of the unbelieving; and a day is at hand when for the last time Christ's people shall be sorrowful, and the world shall rejoice. No matter. Come what may, the issue must be right for those who are in Jesus. We must not be alarmed by conflict when it arrives, however severe it be; but in the midst of it all watch and pray always that we may be accounted worthy to escape those things which shall come upon the earth, and, with all Christ's believing people, be translated at the first resurrection, and stand before the Son of Man.

I speak to those who are hesitating whether to enter the ark—to come to Christ or not. How many looked wistfully and hopelessly on the ark as it floated away, who, when the door was open, might have entered in. Noah had no command to exclude any—he would surely have welcomed any who had been willing to join him; but it was too late then. It is not too late for you now—the door of our ark still stands wide open—still you are invited, besought to take refuge. What holds you back? Your sins? But these are taken away from those who pass within the door. Your want of righteousness? But Christ supplies each with his own. Your helplessness? But he is his people's strength, able to keep them from falling, and to present them faultless

before the presence of his glory. Come, and enter by Christ the door, that you too may be hid in the day of the Lord's anger.

But how many are unwilling to take refuge. You say peace and safety—you think all will be right at last—time enough to escape when others do the same. So they said of old. They said, “The waters cannot overflow the earth in an hour. When the flood begins then we will think about a refuge.” Time enough they had, but not for escaping. The same day that the fountains of the deep were broken up, Noah was shut in, and the world shut out. It will be so hereafter. While all seems safe the saints will ascend together and leave the rest behind. Can you bear the thought of being left then? If now the trump of the archangel should sound, and all who are saved be translated, how bitterly would you weep over lost opportunities and damnation sealed. That is what must happen some day, when for those unchanged there will remain nothing but a fearful looking for of judgment, which shall devour the adversaries.

Dear reader, I beseech you, by the terror and by the mercies of the Lord, not to rush into destruction. Be persuaded even now to pause, to think, to ask yourself Is it safe to be out of Christ? and not lay down this book without having found a Saviour. God's long-suffering waiteth as in the days of Noah—is waiting now for you.

CHAPTER XV.

THE DAYS OF LOT.

Nor without design did our Lord multiply illustrations of his coming. There were points in which the event of Noah's days and Lot's days each resemble those of that day ; but neither of them exhaust the resemblance. This, at least, we learn from the comparison being doubled, which Joseph assigned to Pharaoh as a reason for his double dream, that the thing is certain. It is of the utmost certainty and the utmost importance.

No such events as the flood and the destruction of the cities of the plain have ever happened on our earth. The flood has been written in the annals of almost all nations, and the Dead Sea still bears witness to the ruin which fell upon Sodom and Gomorrah. Nothing, in the least degree, comparable to them has occurred since. The destruction of Jerusalem, terrible as it was, bore no comparison with them whatever ; this was the work of man, those were the works of God. And when our Lord singles out these as the most suitable types of that coming destruction, he tells us, in the most emphatic way, how great that event must be of which these were only types.

We will endeavour to catch those points in the days of Lot, in which the analogy consists with the day of the Son of Man.

First, the position of Lot among the inhabitants of Sodom. He was living in the midst of them; they had, in reality, great reasons of an earthly kind for being very thankful for his presence among them; it was to that they owed their deliverance from Chedor-laomer after the great battle in the plain of Siddim, for Abraham only interfered in the matter for the sake of his brother-in-law. But such obligations are soon forgotten; and so they were in this case. Lot lived among the people of his city, but he was not one of them. They looked upon him as an intruder; he seemed to spoil their pleasures by his warnings. "This one came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge," was the spirit of their conduct towards him. It does not appear that he was much persecuted by them for his godliness; perhaps, because his godliness was not very consistent. But neither was he at all happy there. "He vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds." Such was his condition there: not at home among them; a stranger there, and reckoned as a stranger by those among whom he lived. There was no sympathy of heart; his interests, his affections, his habits, his whole being had a different direction. In one sense Abraham was a pattern of believers; but, in another sense, if Lot does not show us so much what they ought to be, he shows us more what they are. He was mixed up with the people of that wicked city; he was brought into constant contact with them. In business he was continually more or less involved in intercourse with them, and all the more for having relinquished his tent in the field for a house in the city. We do not know exactly what he was doing there; I suppose he still kept his flocks and his herds; but he must have

committed the care of them to his servants, and perhaps was himself engaged in commercial pursuits ; his life, at all events, was a much more busy one than Abraham's, and in this respect more like that of some of my readers. In fact, it was more like life in the present day than Abraham's. It requires a greater effort to put ourselves in the position of Abraham than in that of Lot. Lot's position in Sodom was remarkable for this, his being so much necessarily brought into connection with the ungodly, and his counsel being so almost entirely set at nought by them.

Secondly, God's watchful care over Lot. Lot himself does not appear, in any respect, exactly what he ought to have been. It would be very easy to indicate the weak points in his character ; but notwithstanding this, for Abraham's sake, Lot was an object of constant solicitude on God's part. Though the intercession of Abraham did not save Sodom, it did save Lot. Lot was kept in safety when destruction fell upon his city ; and this care was shown in the warning given to him beforehand. No undistinguishing ruin will ever come from God's hand ; He always makes, in some way, a difference between those who are his, and those who are not his. Sooner than Lot shall perish in the destruction of Sodom, an angel shall warn him of the danger, and place him in safety. Nor did the destruction of Sodom take Lot by surprise ; on all besides it came unexpectedly. Some had not heard of it, and others, like Lot's sons-in-law, thought him in jest for saying that it would happen ; but Lot himself had sufficient notice. He knew that the Lord would destroy the city, though he did not know exactly how he would destroy it. Like Noah before the flood, that day did not come upon him

like a thief in the night. God's watchful care was exercised in his behalf, and he was made, to a certain degree, acquainted with his purposes beforehand. That is a remarkable expression, "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?" And it is quite in accordance with the same principle in the divine dealings that Lot was informed beforehand of what so deeply concerned him. He was not only informed of the coming destruction, but also prepared against it. He was even enabled, though unsuccessfully, to warn others, and beseech them to escape. It is very important, in tracing out the analogy which our Lord declares to exist between the destruction of Sodom and his second coming, to observe this. It quite corresponds with the history of Noah. Both Noah and Lot had warning. Neither of them disbelieved the warning; neither of them were taken by surprise. They did not know exactly when the event would happen, but that it would happen they did know, and that it would happen soon they did know also. The prophecy we are considering dwells very much on the suddenness and unexpectedness of the advent; but in both the instances referred to as examples, the suddenness and the unexpectedness were only characteristics of it to the ungodly, neither to Noah nor to Lot. God took too much care of Lot not to give him ample warning when he destroyed the city in which Lot dwelt.

Thirdly, Lot's deliverance out of Sodom. This was effected by the ministry of angels. The command was given to escape out of the city. Lot and his family lingered. There seems to have been either some remaining unbelief, or some reluctance to leave everything behind. If left to himself he would, it appears, have stayed, notwithstanding the warning. But the Lord

was merciful to him, and by the ministry of angels he was set beyond the gate of the city. When the flood was coming Noah had to build an ark. In this case the little city Zoar answered the same purpose. Lot was enabled to pray for Zoar, and permitted to find shelter there. And it was not till Lot had reached Zoar that the predicted vengeance began to fall. It was one of those strange and appalling scenes, when Lot looked from Zoar on the cities of the plain, which we cannot conceive. He was quite safe there, for the word of God had secured Zoar; and from that place of safety he saw the city he had lived in changed into a furnace. We cannot conceive the feelings of Lot's mind, and need not attempt to do so. The important point for us now is this, that there he was safe. God had delivered him out of the overthrow. He had been snatched away from destruction. He was hidden by God himself from the overflowing scourge.

Fourthly, the state of mind of the inhabitants of Sodom. To them the destruction did come quite unexpectedly. They were not unwarned. This point is not so marked as in the case of the men before the flood. The warnings were neither so many nor so plain. But Lot's exhortation to his sons-in-law, and his sudden flight, were warnings, if they would but have taken them. Such, however, was not the case; the whole thing was totally disbelieved. They attached no weight to it whatever. It did not seem to them as though it would happen, or could happen. "They did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded." How striking a picture of unconcern! They were living without God. Sin ruled in that city, and no fear penetrated their hearts; they forgot all

about him ; he was not in their thoughts. The present occupied all their minds. Such was their condition up to the moment of destruction. Lot's leaving the city does not seem to have alarmed them—they went on just as before ; and it was not till the destruction came that they believed it was coming. While Lot remained in the city that very fact, unknown to them, preserved them. "God said to Lot, I cannot do anything till thou be come to Zoar." While Lot was in Sodom God himself could do nothing, because he will do nothing till his people are safe. As soon as Lot was in safety Sodom's security was gone. Nothing then remained to shield that guilty city. Noah in the ark—Lot in Zoar—the salt is removed, and God's vengeance falls. But they regarded it not ; the men of Sodom rose up that morning, and went about their employments as usual. The merchant, and the buyer, and the agriculturist, and the mechanic, all proceeded to their work. The rising sun saw many a busy group heedless of danger. No mention is made of foreboding clouds which men's imaginations paint. On the contrary, we may almost gather that the morning was bright. The sun was risen on the earth when Lot entered into Zoar ; and the people of Sodom discussed his flight with many a sarcasm, and applauded the wisdom of his sons-in-law in not being carried away with so vain an alarm. What did they care for it ? "They did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded."

Or, if a different feeling seized on their minds, and they began, as is possible, to fear lest after all Lot might be no enthusiast, and that perhaps vengeance was at hand, the result was the same. There is great resemblance between the results of carelessness and the

results of despair. If it was of no use to try to escape; they would resign themselves to what they thought inevitable. "There is no hope, therefore we will walk every one in his own evil way, and do every one according to the imagination of his own evil heart." "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." The men of Sodom may have felt in that way, we are not told; and whether they continued in heedless indifference, or plunged into hopeless despair, it was still the same thing—the same result followed. They acted as if Sodom were to last for ever. "They did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded," while the sun was rising of which they would never see the setting.

Lastly, the storm of fire. It came at last. "The same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all." The exact nature of this terrible infliction we do not know further than it is here described. It was a fiery flood which swept the cities of the plain into destruction. It was more sudden than the deluge, though it only involved a few cities instead of the world's population. But nothing more fearful can be well imagined; and when we bear in mind, what seems to be implied, that the sun rose this morning as fair and bright as usual, and found the guilty inhabitants of the cities of the plain as busy as ever in their employments, and that immediately, without any further note of warning than the disregarded one of Lot's flight, the fire and brimstone came down in one stream of death, sweeping them into destruction in a moment, no wonder so fearful a manifestation of God's anger against sin should still form the pattern of what he will hereafter do to those who live ungodly.

In all these five points, as it was in the days of Lot,

so shall it be in the days when the Son of Man is revealed.

First, as to the position of God's people in the world.

That was a remarkable expression used by our Lord, "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil." Lot seems to have been out of his place in Sodom, because he went there of his own choice. It is a sad thing when God's children themselves choose the society of those who are not God's children. God will bring them out of such an uncongenial atmosphere, but it is not unlikely to be, as was the case with Lot, like one escaping from a fire. Many of God's children are placed, without any choice of their own, in the midst of others who neither fear nor love him. The Church as a whole is so situated in the world. Hence those many expressions about pilgrimage—"I am a stranger and a sojourner as all my fathers were." It was as true of Lot as of Abraham, that he was a pilgrim and a stranger upon earth. Indeed, much more manifestly so, though he lived in a house and a city, instead of in a tomb in a field. It is most necessary that we who are believers should bear this fact in mind. What a light it throws upon everything. If we knew for certain that the city in which we dwell would soon share the fate of Sodom, how much less anxious should we be about some things which cause us anxiety now. There is a day which will be to the Christian what his last day in Sodom was to Lot. We do not know when the Son of Man cometh. We do not know the day in which he will be revealed. If we knew he were coming very soon, as we hope he is, how entirely would

it change our thoughts about many things. Most of us know what it is to be changing our residence, our daily duties, the circumstances of life. The servant is entering a new situation ; the man of business is setting up in a new line ; the family is removing to a new house ; the bride is preparing to quit her father's home for her husband's. In all these cases how what is old loses its interest compared with that which is new. The present work is done—the present duties are accomplished—the present advantages are made use of ; but there is a flutter of heart at the thought of the future. Such should be—such, in proportion as we realize the fact of Christ's advent, must be—our condition of mind in consequence. What is present must pale and look unimportant in comparison with what is coming ; we are but pilgrims and strangers. The present order of things has an end. All these things must be dissolved, but our inheritance, our home is independent of them. We are not to remain in the world for ever. He is coming to take us out of the world. Never must we expect to find the world favourable to us. We must not look for its approbation, we must not fear its frown ; and if it should get worse and worse, be ready, if need be, to resist even unto death.

Secondly, God's watchful care over his people. He is watching over us when we little think about it. If it were not for his care we should be exposed to constant danger and final ruin. We little know how God is ordering all events for our good. The evils which are coming will either not reach us at all, or be changed into blessings. Lot entertained friends when those entered his house who came to destroy Sodom. And

when hereafter in glory we shall read in its golden chronicles the reasons of all that God has done, we shall find in many events, where we little suspect it now, that he has been ordering everything with a most distinct view to our good. Not more watchful was he over Lot in sending angels to succour him than he is over each of his people now. And this care is owing to the intercession of Christ on our behalf. He is ever pleading his own merits before the throne, and, with special reference to his future coming, providing for the safety of his own. He foretold this even when on earth—"I go to prepare a place for you." When the destruction falls, they will be hidden in a better city than Zoar. And this hiding-place he is making ready for them now. This it is which is referred to in those words, "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee." He is going to hide them in the secret of his pavilion, that they may not be hurt in the day of the Lord's anger.

For their sakes he has given so many warnings of his advent. There are signs of the times to which their eyes are not altogether closed, which make Christ's people sure that he is coming. It does not need an angel's visit, since they have his own word, with so many directions in it on this subject. Those who study their Bibles need be at no loss to see that his advent cannot be long delayed. Many events are constantly happening which forewarn us of it. This is true especially at the present time. Much that is taking place in Europe is indicative of the approach of the end. Students of prophecy can entertain no doubt of that. God speaks by these events as plainly to those who have ears to hear, as he did to Lot by his angel.

visitants. In this way he is preparing his people for what is coming ; and of the greatest moment it is to them that they should be prepared for it. We should not have so many warnings given us about watchfulness on this subject if it were not. It is part of God's care for us that he does not leave us without some pre-intimations of the time of the end being near, that we may be prepared for it, and may not be taken by surprise. "Ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief."

Thirdly, the translation of Christ's people from earth at his appearing seems to be plainly one great point in the resemblance between the days of Lot and the day of the Son of Man. "The same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day that the Son of Man is revealed." Lot went out of Sodom before the fiery rain began to fall ; and when the Son of Man is revealed, it will be for the express purpose of delivering his own people from a world which lieth in wickedness. They will go out of it into glory ; not some of them, but all of them ; not those who are alive only, but those also who have fallen asleep—all of them, raised, transfigured, glorified, will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. We saw, in the last chapter, the resemblance to this event in Noah entering into the ark ; we must see it now in Lot entering into Zoar. Till Christ's people are safely housed, the storm of vengeance cannot fall upon the world. He will not allow one spark of his wrath to drop on any one of them ; the whole body must be safe in the Zoar provided for them before judgment begins. Their day of tribulation must have passed away before that of the

world commences. They may, indeed, be living during the first six vials, but these are partial, local, plagues inflicted by wicked men on one another. That which corresponds with the deluge and the storm of fire is inflicted by Christ himself, seated on the white horse as King of kings and Lord of lords. During those plagues the saints may be in Goshen, shielded from them; during this last tribulation of the world, they will be in the ark, in Zoar, with the Lord. But the cross must come first before the crown. The Church has not yet passed through her last tribulation; sharp, short, terrible it will be; but when that has passed there will not remain anything behind. She will be translated to glory, as Lot was hurried into Zoar; nor will it be without the ministry of angels. "He shall send his angels and gather together his elect from the uttermost part of earth to the uttermost part of heaven." How merciful a deliverance! How marvellous a transition! Lot still remained the same; but these risen and translated saints will be the same no longer; their whole condition will be a changed one; they will leave behind them all that is earthly, sinful, unfitted for glory, and, made like unto the Son of Man, be caught up to dwell with Him.

Fourthly, the world without them will be like Sodom without Lot. No impression for good will be produced; for the Spirit will no longer strive with men. Some will be despairing, and others will be careless; but all will plunge with a higher hand than ever into evil. Sodom without Lot was in a desperate condition, and so will the world be without the Church. It will then be a world without hope. The destruction of the antediluvians was delayed for weeks or months

after Noah was shut into the ark—that of tants of Sodom for a few hours after Lot gates. We do not know how long it will the translation of the Church and the pour wrath. But whether the time be longer there will be nothing in it remedial. Thos lated, who now have the Gospel preached to then be lost for ever. The hours, or days, or months, or years may be filled with passed in careless apathy or hopeless de the day of grace will have gone, never to those terrible words have sounded, “ He tha let him be unjust still ; and he that is filthy, filthy still ; and he that is holy, let him be and he that is righteous, let him be righ All will then be fixed ; and though ever remain as usual, except that there will be on earth, there will be this terrible diffe there will be no longer any conversion—no salvation. Oh ! who can say what it wil there is no voice any more of invitation ;—v says no longer, Come ;—when the Spirit speaks in hearts, Come ;—when the Bride translated, and is no longer here to say, Com

But outward difference there will not Lot had gone out of Sodom, that very morn eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, th they builded.” It will be so then. A will wipe out all the memory of what has How soon the death of God’s saints is fo a careless world now ! And it will not then to make their translation seem a thi moment. “ They are gone, but what is

Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." He does not know what human nature is, who thinks that such an impression would never wear off; especially when Satan is at hand to deface it, and the Spirit strives no more with the rebellious. What a God-forgetting or God-defying world that will be! And there is not an unconverted reader of this book who can make sure of not being in it. You, if unsaved before Christ's appearing, will be left behind when his saints are caught up to glory. And though it seems to you now as though while life remains you can always turn to God, you may be found in that world without its salt, which will only ripen for destruction at the great day of the Lord God Almighty.

Lastly, the fiery flood. So it is described in Peter's second Epistle. The destruction of the ungodly will be by fire; and out of that fire will issue the new heavens and the new earth. The question is often asked whether that event will happen at the commencement, or the close of the millennium. Perhaps, in different degrees, at both. Isaiah says, speaking of a period prior to the thousand years, "By fire and by sword will the Lord plead with all flesh; and the slain of the Lord shall be many." And he seems also to place the creation of new heavens and a new earth at the same period; while it is after the millennium John says in Revelation, "I saw a new heaven and a new earth." This, and many other apparent difficulties of the same nature, are easily explained. "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." The whole millennium is in God's eye but a day—the great day of the Lord God Almighty. It is the regeneration—the period

of Earth's new birth; and the events at its commencement and its close are sometimes looked upon as one. God will destroy his enemies with fire at the beginning of these thousand years. The conflagration at their close will be still more terrible. Both are looked upon as one event. And it is to both, regarded as one, the words of Peter apply, "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; wherein the heavens being on fire shall be burned up, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up." It will come as a thief in the night on the world. They will be alone, because the Church will have been translated. With what bitter remorse will men look on the fiery deluge as it comes sweeping along. They might have escaped, and would not; and now escape is impossible. Mercy has ceased to call, Jesus has ceased to invite. It will be then what it never is now—too late. "Seeing, then, that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?"

Unconverted sinner, how terrible is the thought to you of Christ's coming in flaming fire to take vengeance! I need not, and cannot, attempt to describe it. We have not seen it, and cannot imagine it—

"A fiery deluge, and without an ark."

And, unlike as it is to anything we have ever seen, it may be nearer than some of us imagine. The men of Sodom little thought of coming ruin. Oh! be wise now, before it is too late. Still is there mercy. Still forgiveness is offered to you. Still may you, whose sins are so heavy and cry up to

heaven, find pardon in the blood of Jesus. Nothing else can save you, but that can. It has saved others, and can save you. It can save you, and save you now. Oh ! wait not for another day, another hour. But if your heart is trembling—if sin looks black, and conscience whispers danger, go, while yet you may, and hide yourself in Christ, that you may be safe when the flame destroys the ungodly.

“Jesus, thy blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress;
Midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed,
With joy shall I lift up my head.”

There is the believer’s hope. Nothing else can shield him in that day but Christ’s cleansing blood and imputed righteousness, nor can anything hurt those who are safe in him. They will find themselves like Lot in Zoar. And when the hour of wrath has passed away, and the fiery storm has ceased to fall, theirs is the promised blessing—the new heaven and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.

CHAPTER XVI.

"REMEMBER LOT'S WIFE."

THESE words convey a very solemn warning, fitted for all times, and without any reference whatever to prophecy; and before we leave them we will look upon them in that point of view. They have always hung suspended in Scripture as the most impressive announcement of the danger of resting satisfied with anything short of safety,—of salvation,—of rest in Christ.

But we must first examine the meaning of the words as they occur in the prophecy. There is considerable difficulty in understanding it. The passage is as follows:—"In that day he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away; and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back. Remember Lot's wife."*

The difficulty is twofold. First, we have a difficulty arising from the fact that almost the same words occur in Matthew and Mark in a somewhat different connection. In Matt.^{*}xxiv. two statements are made. In verse 15 we read, "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place (whoso readeth, let him understand), then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains. Let him which is on the housetop not

* Luke xvii. 32.

come down to take any thing out of his house ; neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.” That this refers to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans is plain enough. The Christians did actually follow the counsel here given, and during an interval providentially afforded, after the Roman eagles first appeared before the city, by an otherwise unaccountable withdrawal of the besieging army, they fled to Pella, in the mountains of Judea, and remained there in safety, while their unbelieving countrymen were overthrown. It is supposed by some, and strong reasons may be given for so thinking, that at the time of that yet future siege of Jerusalem, described in Zechariah xiv., these words will have a further and perhaps still more important fulfilment, since there appears to be a very close connection, the one being the type of the other, between the tribulation of Judah at the beginning, and the tribulation of Judah at the close of the long period of Jewish dispersion, and each is the work of the Roman Empire, of which, in its apostate as well as its heathen form, the eagle, or “abomination of desolation,” is the symbol. If the command in Luke not to return back could refer to either of these events there would be no difficulty ; but there is, further down in Matt. xxiv., an entirely distinct prophecy of the coming of the Son of Man—“Of that day and hour knoweth no man; no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came and took

them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill, the one shall be taken and the other left." Now, if we compare these words with those immediately following the command, "Remember Lot's wife," in Luke, we shall see that they must refer to the same event. They are, in fact, identical in sense. Hence, the remarkable command to go at once, which is connected in St. Matthew with the destruction of Jerusalem, and perhaps also with events to happen there hereafter, appears in our chapter stripped of its local reference to the mountains of Judea, enforced by the history of Lot's wife, and in immediate connection with the coming of the Son of Man.

One of our living poets has said, speaking of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans—

"E'en thus, amidst thy pride and luxury,
O earth, shall that last coming burst on thee—
That secret coming of the Son of Man;
When all the cherub-throning clouds shall shine
Irradiate with his bright advancing sign."

And truly, for as the flood and the overthrow of the cities of the plain, so also was the destruction of Jerusalem typical of that day. And this, no doubt, is the reason why words used in one passage respecting the one, are used in another passage respecting the other.

But then there arises another difficulty—what is the meaning of the exhortation when it relates, as in the verse before our text, to the day of Christ's appearing? "In that day—the day when the Son of Man is revealed—he which is upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away; and

he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back,
Remember Lot's wife."

Let me observe, in the first place, that perhaps the command in Matt. xxiv., as applied to the Christians in Jerusalem when besieged by the Romans, was not to be understood in the letter but in the spirit. It is expressed in Luke xxi. 20, in words which I suppose contain all that was actually intended. "When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let those which are in the midst of it depart out, and let not them that are in the countries enter thereunto." Time enough was allowed for escaping; and the nature of the warning sign—the investment of Jerusalem by an army—forbids the literal forcing of the words into a prohibition against going home, or taking the inside staircase instead of the outside. As far as the command to escape from Jerusalem is concerned, we can only interpret the words as meaning that no time was to be lost. And if, in this case, we cannot interpret it literally, we need not in the other case, when it relates to the time of Christ's appearing, interpret it literally. If we could not interpret it literally it would be no objection; but I am inclined to think we may.

Will the reader allow me to make a supposition? If, in some unmistakable manner, at this moment, by the voice of the archangel, all believers were bidden to stand, and wait till caught up into the air, how many would do so? With no circumstances of terror, nothing but the still small voice of conscience within, telling them that they are not believers, how many, when those who are believers are invited to remain at

the Lord's Supper, as the mere result of personal consciousness and honest conviction, walk away. And is it not probable that the same conviction would act with still greater force if suddenly summoned to the marriage supper of the Lamb? Besides which, what unconverted man would dare to wait in the expectation of being caught up to meet the Lord in the air? If his ascent depended in any degree on his own will, rather than go up, he would call on the hills to fall on him, and the mountains to cover him.

I know of nothing in Scripture to lead to the supposition that any man will be caught up to glory against his will. The angels laid hold upon Lot, and hastened him away; but he was willing to go, though too slow about it. In every day of God's power he makes his people willing; and it is in accordance with this I understand the words we are considering. When Christ appears, and the voice of the archangel awakens the dead, and summons the living saints to his presence, men will be engaged in all their usual occupations. The distinction between us now is not always visible; but yet it is really known to each individual heart. If there is an unreality in the profession some men make of being Christians, there is an unreality also in the doubts some men express of being Christians. It is not really so difficult to be right about this matter. I am quite sure that when the sign of the Son of Man appears in heaven it will need no new revelation to tell each of us whose we are; and each believer as he is found is commanded to remain. His earthly possessions are no longer needed, he has no preparation to make for going, and has only to stand still till borne upon angels' wings, or in a chariot of fire, to meet the Lord in the air. Conscience,

dread of Christ's presence, desire of making preparation, going to buy oil like the foolish virgins, will prevent all others from obeying this command. Can you not imagine what would infallibly take place if Christ's immediate coming should be made quite certain—how the man on the housetop would rush into an inner chamber, and he in the field would hurry home to his family, and some would be crowding into the churches, and others seeking counsel from God's children? And if Christ's coming has been unexpected, unwatched for, how likely is such a result to follow. None of Christ's people will share the fate of Lot's wife; but to avoid it they must watch. For it seems that in that day men will draw the line themselves, and their own consciences will compel them to try to escape from him that sitteth on the throne, if they are not his. The believer only will stand ready to exchange his earthly life for a heavenly, for he will have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.

“Remember Lot's wife.” She was just outside the gates of Sodom when she looked back on what she had left, and became a pillar of salt. She represents those who, while numbered with Christ's people now, will then be found not to have been really of them. The test in her case was that look back on Sodom; the test in this case will be unwillingness to be caught up to meet the Lord. They will save their life in this world, and lose the life eternal. If such is the meaning of our text, it is indeed full of solemn warning, and it brings the realities of that day almost within the compass of our own experience. How impossible for any but the believer to remain under such circumstances, and wait till he is taken up.

In this way I interpret the expressions more literally in their connection when referring to Christ's advent, than we can interpret them in the other connection when referring to the investment of Jerusalem by the Romans. The man on the housetop is not to go down into the house, or the man in the field to return home, but each to be caught up where he is; and the readiness to do so is the test at that moment of discipleship. Christ is a great magnet. He draws each believing heart now, and will then draw each believing eye. Not one of his people will be disposed to turn away from him for a moment. Lot's wife's heart was in Sodom—her treasure was there—her affections were there—and her eyes naturally turned thitherward. And there will be those in that day who, like Lot's wife, will cling to earth, and, though looked upon as Christians before, show, by not being attracted by Christ's personal presence, but repelled, that they have neither part nor lot in the matter. In this way, each, if not a believer, will then be self-condemned. None will be left behind but those who will not go. As now, we see so often the absolute impossibility, till God gives his grace, of a soul believing in Jesus, so will it then be seen how utterly impossible it is for one unsaved to wish to be with Jesus. Men will exclude themselves; they will not dare to await or obey the summons, "Come up hither;" nor will they wish to do so, for their hearts are earthly, bound to earth. They have no confidence in Jesus, and no love to him; and the very same reasons which keep them from staying when Christ's people stay at his table on earth, will keep them from going when Christ's people go to his presence above. All this seems to be brought before us vividly in these words. What

the man is will then appear by his own spontaneous action. The unbeliever will seek to escape from Christ's presence in vain; the Christian longing to be with Christ will willingly part with mortality. "Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it, and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it." "Remember Lot's wife."

This shows us the necessity of confidence in Christ. We know how everywhere this is represented as the turning point. It is so in being saved. He that believeth hath passed from death unto life. It is so in every part of the Christian life, we live by the faith of the Son of God; and it appears that it will be so in that day, that those who are his, and only they, will have confidence in him, and not be afraid of meeting him. As faith saves now, faith will distinguish the saved then.

It shows us also the wisdom of watching for Christ's advent. The warning is given us for this very purpose. The similar warning given to the disciples in reference to the destruction of Jerusalem doubtless kept them in a state of readiness for so sudden a flight; and since we know that he is coming suddenly like a flash of lightning, and that each believer must be ready then immediately to ascend—must not leave the post where that moment finds him, but, wherever he may be and whatever he may be engaged in, there remain till translated—how urgent a reason for constant watchfulness, that we may be nowhere, and be doing nothing, where we would not then be found, or which we would not then be engaged in. That consideration fairly applied would answer many a difficult question as to Christian men's duties. The man on the housetop may be supposed to be in prayer; the man in the field, engaged in his usual employments.

It matters not: it is just as appropriate a position for the Christian to be found in at work in his daily business as at home praying. He need desist from neither till the sign of the Son of Man appears, nor be ashamed of either when it does appear. The Christian ploughman may let go his team, and the Christian tradesman leave the ink wet on his ledger, and the Christian mechanic drop the hammer and the nail, and the Christian student quit the unfinished sentence, and the Christian soldier cast away his henceforth useless weapon to tread the air with a glorified body. But think you, would you like to stand still in a theatre or a ball-room, and wait for your change? Would you not of necessity try to escape? And yet, if I understand this text aright, there will be neither time nor opportunity for any such proceeding. The Christian must ascend up where he is. And the conscience which is purged by the blood of Jesus will show itself in a readiness to do so. How careful should we be not to be found where confidence would be impossible. I am sure it will not be so with any of God's children. Oh, how important never to be now where it is certain no child of God will be at the moment of Christ's appearing. It seems that at that moment the secrets of all hearts will be revealed; and, just as Lot's wife showed her love to Sodom after she had begun apparently to leave it, so it may be that many have their hearts in the world, which is enmity against God, who are only found among those who are Christ's people. Then this will make itself manifest. Lot's wife could not help looking back. She was leaving all she cared for; and when the angel had set her without the gates she turned towards the guilty city, gray perhaps in the twilight, for the sun

had not yet risen, nor had the fire fallen, and wished herself there. The heart was in that look, and it was followed by destruction—she became a pillar of salt. Even so shall it be when the Son of Man is revealed. It is not simply on those outwardly living without Christ that destruction will come. Unconverted members of Christian families—those who have the form of godliness, but deny the power thereof—men and women with the world in their hearts—will then show, as unmistakably as she did, the real state of the case. It needs not much to show it. A look back on Sodom was decisive. And there will be those who have seemed to belong to the family of God, of whom it will then be evident to all that their heart was never right, and to whom he will say, “I know you not. Depart from me all ye that work iniquity.” “Remember Lot's wife.”

Leaving the prophetic bearing of this warning we will look at it now in a simple form, as expressive of a great fact of every-day occurrence.

Lot and his family had just escaped out of Sodom. The warning of the angels had not been without effect. We may be sure that not one of that family but felt greatly alarmed by what was said to them. Lot showed his apprehension by his efforts to induce his sons-in-law to accompany him. No doubt Lot's daughters shared in the same, and most likely Lot's wife also. She suffered herself to be placed outside the gate, and had, we may suppose, some thoughts of escaping with her husband. But there is a difference between thinking of escaping, and actually escaping; and this difference soon appeared. She had not really set her heart on arriving at Zoar. There was no appearance of coming disaster, and she wished herself at home again. The

wish was shown in the look, and the result was destruction.

There is a vast difference between being made alarmed, and being placed in safety. In Lot's case it was the distance between Sodom and Zoar. It is just in this space that so many make shipwreck and perish in sight of land.

Few men are always and at all times free from anxiety about the safety of their souls. God sends warnings. Conscience bears testimony to sinfulness. At this particular period I doubt whether many can know of the conversion of so many in many lands without having their hearts stirred. And it does appear at times as though all that is needed were to stir up men's convictions, and that then all the rest would be sure to follow. But the lesson which Lot's wife teaches us is that this is not enough. There was no safety for Lot and his family till they reached Zoar, nor is there for any one of us without finding refuge in Christ. The most earnest seeking, the most strenuous efforts will not stand in the place of simple trust in him.

"Remember Lot's wife." There is one who has many serious, solemn impressions of the reality of divine things. The deaths of others have made the heart desirous of being ready for death; the anticipations of judgment to come have sounded through the inner man, and shaken the soul to its centre; and then there is perhaps a step taken in making a reformation; something not right is relinquished. But after all there is no escaping —no flying for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us. Then it will not last. It is the natural tendency of all feelings to wear out. The dread of wrath will wear out. The impression of the necessity of salva-

tion will wear out. It is not possible for any one to retain these impressions always; they will lose their force and fall to the ground like a spent ball; and if they have not so far succeeded as to lead the sinner to the Saviour, no result will follow from them. The effort made will prove to be nothing; and the heart, like that of Lot's wife, will look back on what it has relinquished, and embrace it again.

“Remember Lot's wife.” Lot himself was a saved man, and his wife remained unsaved. Contrast his household with that of Abraham. He had to leave in Sodom his two sons-in-law and married daughters, and then his wife was herself involved in the destruction. Abraham's wife was like himself, and he commanded his children and his household after him to fear the Lord. Nothing is so happy as a family united in God's service, nothing so sad as a divided household, except one which is all asleep in the sleep of death. Lot's wife is not of necessity like Lot. My reader may be a wife whose husband is a believer, or a husband whose wife is a believer, a child whose parents serve the Lord, or parents whose children are God's children, while you yourself are not. We are saved individually. The husband's faith will not do for the wife, nor the wife's faith for the husband, the parents' for the child, nor the child's for the parents; and it is a very awakening thought, or ought to be, for members of families in which one or more are Christians, that those like Lot have escaped into a place of safety while they remain in danger of instant destruction. Certainly we feel more the death of Lot's wife than that of all the other inhabitants of Sodom. She seemed so near escaping and yet was involved in the ruin of her city;

and, surely, if there is one over whom more than another the Christian's heart yearns, it is over one whose husband, or wife, or brother, or sister, or parent, or child is saved, and who yet is at present lost. When we see from the bosom of a Christian family the look backward to a world of sin which ought to have been renounced—when, amidst favouring circumstances, escape is delayed and trifled with—how naturally does one echo the words of our text and say, “Remember Lot's wife.”

“Remember Lot's wife.” There is warning even for those who have really begun to run the Christian course. I am persuaded that God never allows those whom he has enabled to set out Zionward to fail coming there; but he uses means, and one of those means is such warnings as our text. He makes such warnings effectual in the case of his own people. “Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?” And, therefore, thank God, it is not every look backward which issues in this result. Those who become like Lot's wife in their destruction, begin by being like her in never having come to Jesus and been saved. But the warning was addressed, nevertheless, to the disciples. Every true disciple will not only hear it but be influenced by it. Our safety being ensured by a promise is a reason for encouragement, not a reason against watchfulness. The Lord preserves us not without watching, but in watching. Oh, we must watch over our hearts. It was the heart of Lot's wife which was wrong. The world was in that look—it came out of her heart. It is the heart in which evil commences—there declension begins. Over that we must guard most carefully. “Keep thy heart

ith all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life."

"Remember Lot's wife." We must be looking forward. How striking those words are of Jesus. "He that hath put his hand to the plough, and looketh back, is not fit for the kingdom of heaven." And we may contrast this with what Paul says of himself, "Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press towards the mark." Ever must we keep our faces Zionward—we must not allow them to fix eagerly on anything around us. It is Christ, and Christ alone, who is not only the refuge but the portion of his people. With him they are satisfied. It is a grievous thing when, under any circumstance, something else is desired instead of him. This it is which destroys so many who are not his, and injures so many who are his. You have nothing to do with what is behind—your business is altogether with what is before. "Remember Lot's wife."

"Remember Lot's wife." What reason have those who are together escaping to exhort one another daily while it is called to-day, lest any of them should be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin! We must persuade each other not to be weary in well-doing, not to faint in our course, but to go onward and onward toward the mark for the prize of our high calling.

But, oh! how often does God restrain his children not only from looking back but from going back. Lot's wife was not God's child, and she remains a monument of the danger of trifling with the opportunity of escaping. But how affecting ought the thought to be to some, that though they have done the same thing, they

have not met with the same fate. God who spared not Lot's wife has spared you. You have turned aside after that which could not profit you ; and yet you have not been allowed to be consumed in surrounding iniquity. Still he has drawn you back again and again. Again and again you have been inclined to plunge into some vortex of sin and ungodliness, and then an arm has been thrown around you, and, by strength not your own, you have been delivered from the danger. Oh, if he had not dealt very differently with some of us from the way in which he dealt with Lot's wife, where should we have been ?

How great is the necessity for each declining Christian to take warning. Lot's wife had not to take two steps—one look was enough. God does not so act towards his children : the greater reason for remedying all that is amiss. Never be satisfied if your feet are treading or your eyes are gazing at the downward path. The first step in backsliding must be arrested. When made conscious of even a look backward, take it to the cross to be sprinkled in the blood—so you shall never be like Lot's wife.

The hours are hastening onward. Ere long the Sun of Righteousness will rise, with healing on his wings, on those who fear God's name, and the storm of wrath fall on the ungodly ; “and the day that cometh shall burn like an oven, and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be as stubble.” Are you still unsaved ? Jesus is ready to receive you. Though you cannot walk he will carry you. He will place you in safety, only commit yourself into his hands. Then you, too, shall be saved now, and be safe in the day when the Son of Man is revealed.

CHAPTER XVII.

TRANSLATION OF THE SAINTS.

THE first resurrection is, as we have seen all along, the day when the Son of Man is revealed. It is called by different names—sometimes that day and sometimes that night: a fact itself suggestive of its world-wide results; since whatever happens simultaneously all over the globe, must happen in the day and in the night. Sometimes it is called the “manifestation of the sons of God,” and sometimes the “glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour.” But whatever it is called, it is still the same blessed day, towards which the eyes of the Church are looking, when, as far as believers are concerned, all will be finished, and mortality be swallowed up of life. One of its characteristics will be the sudden separation between the people of God and others: “One shall be taken and the other left.”

Our examination of one or two verses in the prophecy of Luke xvii. resulted in this—that when the Son of Man appears, men’s own consciences will decide the point for them; that none whose consciences are not sprinkled with the blood of Jesus, and who have not learned to trust him, will dare to stand still and be caught up to meet him; that all the rest, seeking to save their life in that moment will lose it really; while the children of God, dropping their earthly nature—in

this sense losing their life—will be transfigured, and gain a life which is heavenly and eternal. God's manner of acting is much more often in accordance with what seems to be the natural course of events than opposed to it. And it seems that it will be so then. Those will be caught up who are ready to be caught up, and willing to be caught up, and none besides. Those will be left behind who wish to escape from the presence of the Saviour, and none besides.

And this is, I think, the meaning of that difficult text with which the chapter ends. The disciples had listened to this prophecy; they heard of men and women being taken, and men and women being left; and they asked the not unnatural question, "Where, Lord?" There was an indefiniteness as to place in the whole prophecy, which naturally led to this question. Was he speaking of any particular place, or any particular country. Where was it to be? Where would these events happen? The words, "As the lightning that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven," suggested the idea of wide extension. Where was all this to happen? Instead of a direct answer, our Lord quoted what seems to have been a common proverb—"Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together." This proverbial expression is commonly interpreted as meaning simply that the risen and changed saints would ascend to meet the Lord in the air, as straight and swift as an eagle flieth. But I think the real meaning of the proverb is somewhat different. It is meant to express the certainty that similarity of object and taste will gather together men from the most opposite quarters. It

refers to the common attraction which will draw the saved to the Saviour. It answers the question, Where? by saying that wherever there are Christians there will some be caught up to meet Christ. It will not be confined to any particular region; but in every place in which there are believers, there this will take place, and each child of God ascend to glory.

It is of this translation that our Lord expresses himself in words which mark the importance of what he is saying: "I tell you"—I, who alone can say anything about it—"I tell you in that night there shall be two men in one bed, the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding together, the one shall be taken and the other left." Both men and women are mentioned in proof of its universality as to all persons; the occupations of day and of night are mentioned to show its universality as to all places; and the result is described in the most plain, distinct, unambiguous language—"The one shall be taken and the other left."

In examining these words, it is necessary to look at the position which the event described in them occupies with respect to other events. They refer to the time of the first resurrection. The proof of this is easily given. In 1 Thess. iv. 13, we read, "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep. For

the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord." It is here expressly stated that the living saints shall not be translated till the dead saints are raised. And, therefore, the event described in our text, of one being taken, and the other left, must be subsequent to the resurrection of the saints. Whether there is any interval or not does not appear so clearly. But it does seem quite certain—it is, in fact, the plain, distinct statement of the word of God—that the translation of those who are alive cannot take place before the resurrection of those who have fallen asleep. The two are to happen in close connection: the resurrection first, and then the translation. And, therefore, though the resurrection is not spoken of in our text, it must be understood. Our text speaks only of the translation of the living. But that implies the resurrection of the dead. Not one of Christ's faithful ones will be left behind. He will make as marked a difference among the inhabitants of the graves as among those of earth. The bodies of the saints already with Christ in glory, will be raised once more, and reunited to their souls. Not one of the people of Christ, however weak while living, will be forgotten then. All who have ever trusted him, all who have slept in Jesus, will then awake glorious and immortal. They will take priority of their living brethren, for these will be raised before those are translated. All this is understood in these words. It speaks not of the sleeping saints, but it tells us of those who shall be

then alive, among whom there must be separation—between whom will stretch the line which exists now, and may be crossed, but will then exist, and cannot be crossed, having widened into a gulph impassable.

And I see no reason, why we, who are living now, should not ourselves be in the number of those who shall be alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord. Predicted events are rushing by with giant strides. It is wonderful to those who watch the signs of the times, and compare them with the oracles of God, to see how much more the present state of affairs in our world resembles that which is to precede the advent than it did a few years ago. This is true, both as it respects what is evil and what is good. All appears to be falling into that form and order which it must assume to satisfy the requirements of prophecy before the coming of the Son of Man. And, for this reason, I feel that these words, always intended to impress the mind with the necessity of being ready, ought to have a double weight with us, who may ourselves witness that day—"The one shall be taken and the other left."

The suddenness of the translation is strongly implied in the form of expression. Yet this is not inconsistent with an interval of waiting after all is fixed, which seems required to leave time for the resurrection. The announcement of the coming of the Son of Man will be sudden as a flash of lightning, and will leave no longer any opportunity for change, any place for repentance.

Almost all things happen really suddenly. Events long expected generally terminate in an abrupt ending. Death, long waited for, often comes at last by surprise. And so it will be with that day. It has been foretold

for ages. It has been looked for by multitudes of believers. The signs of its approach are neither small nor few. But when at last it does come, it will burst forth suddenly. There is a beautiful emblem used more than once in the Old Testament to represent a sudden event, the gathering and conversion of the Jewish people (Micah v. 7), "The remnant of Jacob shall be among the Gentiles, in the midst of many people as a dew from the Lord, as the showers upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men." (Psalm cx. 3) "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth." That is, thy converts shall be like in number to the dew-drops. The dew falls suddenly. It is not formed at all till the air acquires a certain temperature in proportion to that of the ground. Then the moisture of the atmosphere suddenly, at this dew point, as it is called, is condensed in the form of pearly drops on the earth's surface. It does not take an hour, or a few minutes, or a few seconds, but is done instantaneously. So suddenly will the risen saints appear when the Son of Man is revealed. We wait and watch long before the event comes. But when it does come, it will come all at once; the transition from waiting to certainty will be the work of a moment; and like the dew-drops on the grass, God's saints will be found rising from every spot, from the well-remembered tomb, and the broad ocean, all on the instant glorious. How beautiful a sight!

And not less sudden will be the change which then will pass over those who are alive. "We shall be changed"—not by slow degrees, but suddenly that transition will take place. From the very midst of the

employment in which each is occupied, some aroused from sleep, some hard at work, in all those various stations in which God's people are engaged, then and there, at the sound of the archangel's trumpet, each will be summoned to meet the Lord in the air. It will take place while all is going on as usual, while there is no sign of change—except that midnight cry, unheard or disregarded by the world—but everything promising long and durable continuance. Then it shall be that, “one shall be taken and the other left.”

The inwardness of the previous difference is clearly shown. The examples used show the most thorough association between those who will be most completely divided. Although it is Christians' duty to be as much together as possible, and as separate from the world as possible, it is impossible not to be mixed up in a great many ways with those who fear not God. Few families are so blest as to contain none but believers. The Christian, if he has not to mix with those who are not Christians in his own house, has to do so in his business. In some way or other he is brought into contact with them. The same mill may be turned by a Christian on one side and a child of this world on the other. It is not our outward circumstances which make the difference; and though there ought to be, and is a great and perceptible difference in the manner of doing the same thing between one who has the love of God in the heart and one who has it not, yet the real distinction is itself wholly inward. In the house of prayer there are children of God and children of the evil one, and in the house of business there are children of God and children of the evil one. We cannot separate the one from the other, however much we try to do so; and

there is a sense in which the thing is so impossible that we must not even make the attempt. "Let both grow together until the harvest." The distinction is within, it is in the heart; and men and women whose hearts are severed by a difference which will prove to be eternal, do yet meet together, eat together, walk together, converse together, transact business together, and are bound up together in all the relations of public and private life. This is the consideration which to minds of a certain order is more appalling than any other. Those who do not take the Bible for their guide charge us with this result of our teaching. They say that they cannot, and will not believe it. I have no wish to deny the thrilling nature of this truth. I quite admit that it is calculated to arouse men to most deep conviction. It is, indeed, truth of wonderful interest, fearful to think of, and if it were our own invention might justly challenge disbelief; but it is exactly the teaching of our text, "Two women shall be grinding together, the one shall be taken and the other left. Two men shall be in the field, the one shall be taken and the other left." Then it is true, that notwithstanding the resemblance which there is among men and women now, though they are bound up together in a hundred different ways now—though there is no perceptible difference between them now, yet that difference shall be seen. It does really exist, and will show itself then. I quite admit that this is a very startling thought—that it would be much less so if there was a more distinct separation in all the business of life than there is; but, however startling, it is yet true. It is not the mere teaching of the preacher—it is not an inference drawn by man—it

is the express assertion of Christ himself, illustrated by the most familiar examples, "that one shall be taken and the other left."

The difference then is not outward, but inward, and yet in that day it will result in the most visible and palpable difference imaginable—in one being caught up to heaven, and the other left hopeless upon earth. In what, then, does this difference consist? What is the inward difference now among those outwardly alike which will issue in a difference so momentous hereafter?

We must return for an answer to this question to the words which stand at the commencement of this prophecy. . What our Lord said to the Pharisees answers it, "Behold the kingdom of God is within you;" like as these individuals are in outward employments, there exists all the breadth of this distinction, "the kingdom of God is within you." God's kingdom set up in the heart is that which makes the difference; and if we ask further what this kingdom of God is, we have another text to explain it—"The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

It is not anything outward—meat and drink are specified, but the principle applies to everything. Nothing outward constitutes this kingdom; it is the work of the Holy Ghost in the heart. He sets up within the believer a kingdom, weak in its beginning, yet perfect, and which must ultimately absorb into it the whole man. This inward kingdom is spoken of as righteousness, by which I think we must in this place understand the holiness which is the Spirit's work within. He plants a holy principle where before sin

only existed. In that seed of grace is wrapped up all the future developments which must terminate eventually in glory. This does not exist at all, except in those who are regenerate—it is the peculiarity of God's children. And what they do which is pleasing to God, is done in consequence of this seed of grace within. The same actions may be done on quite different principles; but it is the principle which decides the colour of the action, not the action which decides the colour of the principle. It is this seed, this principle of holiness implanted by the Spirit in the heart, which does make all the difference between one and another—which makes the distinction between having the kingdom and not having the kingdom within us. This principle he does implant in every believer in Jesus—it comes with and in believing. It is expressly promised as the result of receiving Christ. “As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them which believe on his name; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” The Spirit creates his kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy, in the heart of every one who receives the Saviour.

Peace and joy are coupled together with righteousness, though forming a part of it, because they are so conspicuous in this inward kingdom. Where the Spirit dwells—where he erects Christ's throne—he sheds abroad peace. We read of joy and peace in believing. He makes the heart to have peace in Christ, and to rejoice sometimes in the hope of the glory of God. Paul describes believers as those who are “the circumcision who worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.”

These are those who have the kingdom set up within them. Conscious of their own sinfulness and helplessness they have fled to Jesus for refuge. In him they have peace—in him they rejoice; and the Spirit has created within them a nature which will always be holy, formed after the image of Christ himself.

This inward kingdom is often small in extent and weak in power. It is opposed by enemies on all sides. Satan is constantly seeking to destroy. It cannot be seen outwardly, but it is there; and those in whom that kingdom exists will be taken to the kingdom above. There is a natural affinity between the two. It is just as certain that those in whom is the kingdom within will in that day ascend upward, as that steel filings will fly towards the loadstone. Then how all-important to have the heart so touched by the Holy Ghost, as to be attracted by Christ. To all his people Christ is an object of attraction. Till you bring a loadstone near you do not know its powers, but once hold it near those little particles of steel, and it soon, it will at once draw them to itself. The Christian when Christ comes will go up to meet him. All his hours of sufferings, temptation, and sorrow, will be over, and while others are left he will be taken.

The decisiveness of the line is expressed in Christ's word more plainly than in any we can use. Lines are really as decisive now, though not so lasting, but they are also not so visible, and persons forget or hide from themselves on which side of the line they are. You see how strongly the line is drawn in our text, and yet up to the moment of translation there will be nothing to mark it more plainly than it is marked now. It is marked now quite plainly enough, only too many shut

their eyes to it ; but then it will be impossible to do so. No one will then be able to say that any are partly Christians. It will then be felt, what is really the case always, that there are no half Christians. The line is clear, firm, decisive—on this side life, on that side death. I want to persuade each of my readers not to rest satisfied without being clearly, unambiguously, unmistakably, on the Lord's side. If he should come now, which would be your lot ? Would you be among the taken or would you be among the left ?

How complete will be the change. "One shall be taken"—taken, where ?—"to meet the Lord in the air;" and that implies what is elsewhere asserted—the transformation of the whole man. We cannot enter into the Lord's presence without being made meet for it; and when that day arrives we shall be made like him, for we shall see him as he is. Those who are changed, as well as those who are raised, will be changed completely. This body, so full of sin, infirmity, helplessness, corruption, will be made into the likeness of the Son of Man. Here is a thought which may cheer the heart of many a patient sufferer. Your body is a burden to you ; you find it a constant hindrance, but then this vile body shall be made like his glorious body, according to the mighty working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself.

"One shall be taken." It is in some respects difficult to us to conceive the merely physical alteration implied in this expression. Our resurrection bodies, in which expression I include the bodies of the changed saints, will, like our Lord's glorified body, be capable of ascension. Enoch was not, for God took him. Elijah went up in a fiery chariot. Our Lord

himself rose in the air without any such assistance. Most likely his glorified Church will do the same. We need not ask how; it only requires one word from God to make that easy. Their hold on earth will, for a while, be unclasped; their feet will tread the air; till caught up into the presence of their King, amidst the wondering gaze of those who are left behind, they are lost in the clouds of glory which surround the throne.

"One shall be taken." It seems to be implied that all will, for a while, remain the same below as it was before. And, therefore, we must suppose the sons of God taken out of sight within the diamond walls and pearly gates of the New Jerusalem. I think there is reason for believing that the heavenly Jerusalem will one day be visible from earth; but not at the first resurrection. It is inconsistent with the events which are to follow Christ's appearing to gather his saints, to suppose any permanent manifestation of glory then. We could not imagine the world to go on as usual under such circumstances. The saints taken up to glory will no doubt remain for a time beyond man's sight, while apostate Christendom runs to its last excess of riot. How blessed their condition! Our eternity will then have commenced; then we shall know many things which now we vainly seek to understand; we shall then find ourselves in the most illustrious society imaginable; we shall see all who have ever loved Christ and glorified God; we shall talk familiarly with apostles, and prophets, and saints, and martyrs, with Isaiah and Daniel, and Paul, and John. "I count upon seeing these men," said a dying Christian the other day. If believers, we shall all see them when caught up to meet our Lord, and

those also whom we have known and loved below. Oh! what a joyous day will that be, to stand on the glassy pavement and know for certain we are there.

"One shall be taken." And shall I be one of them? How earnestly should each inquire whether the words belong to him. Would it be so even now? If, while reading these pages you were summoned, would you go? Has Jesus any attraction for you? Could you bear his eyes, which are as a flame of fire? Are you washed in his blood, clothed in his righteousness, accepted through his merits? Are you his, and is he yours?

WATCH. It is the command of Jesus himself. So much emphasis does he lay upon it, that it would seem as though before he came, it would be the distinction of his people.

WATCH. He has bidden us watch because we know not the day nor the hour of his coming. An event, the exact time of which is carefully concealed, calls for continual watchfulness. And if it be, as we have seen reason to think, that when he does come, there will be no time to lose, but that each must be ready to ascend where he is at the moment, how watchful a spirit should we maintain. "Take heed, lest at any time your heart should be overcharged with surfeiting drunkenness and the cares of this life, and so that day should come on you as a thief."

WATCH. For though the day and the hour of his coming are unknown, there are sure signs thickening around us, assuring us that it is not far off; and as it comes we shall need all watchfulness to keep our garments and maintain our constancy. Perilous times are at hand. We shall find, dear brethren, that hours of darkness are approaching; but the expectation of

his glorious advent will be to his watching people like a bright and shining star. Keep your eyes fixed upon it. Then, come what may, you will have a hope which maketh not ashamed.

CHAPTER XVIII.

JERUSALEM AND LONDON.

"O JERUSALEM, JERUSALEM ! WHICH KILLEST THE PROPHETS, AND STONEST THEM THAT ARE SENT UNTO THEE, HOW OFTEN WOULD I HAVE GATHERED THY CHILDREN TOGETHER, AS A HEN DOETH GATHER HER BROOD UNDER HER WINGS, AND YE WOULD NOT ! BEHOLD, YOUR HOUSE IS LEFT UNTO YOU DESOLATE : AND VERILY I SAY UNTO YOU, YE SHALL NOT SEE ME UNTIL THE TIME COME WHEN YE SHALL SAY, BLESSED IS HE THAT COMETH IN THE NAME OF THE LORD."

What love, what tenderness breathes in these words ! The eye of Jesus was at that moment glancing from point to point along the future. His miracles of mercy still to be witnessed in Jerusalem—his death, which he must accomplish at Jerusalem—Jerusalem's long desolation—the time to come, when once more Jerusalem would welcome him, were all before him ; and he felt as on another occasion, when he beheld the city and wept over it. We do not read that he wept over Bethlehem, where he was born, or Nazareth, where he was brought up, or Capernaum, where he lived, though he denounced woe upon the last. He speaks of Jerusalem with a tenderness with which he does not speak of Chorazin or Bethsaida. And yet these words are sufficient to prove a pre-eminence in guilt ; and in the verse before he says, " It cannot

be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem." There was, notwithstanding, a pre-eminence of love with which Jerusalem was regarded. Explain it how we will, reason about it as we please, it is still not to be denied that Jerusalem is regarded by God as unlike any other city. We may try to banish altogether this thought from our mind, but it must be by shutting up our Bibles. In prosperity or adversity, there hangs over that city a mysterious destiny. It is not interesting only as having been the scene of the greatest transaction earth ever witnessed. It does not possess an attraction merely for our imagination. God has, in a manner most distinct, marked it for his own; and, notwithstanding its present deep humiliation, and, as I expect, its speedy rise into human greatness and deeper ungodliness, still it is linked with God's eternal purposes. Like the people of Israel, the city of Jerusalem is still beloved; God's eye is upon her for good; and at last, when the time has fully come, he will speak comfortably to her, and bid her arise and shine. "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee."

Let no one be surprised if a very different history should first be enacted at Jerusalem. Prophecy apart, there is much reason for supposing that from this time, forward, that city will assume an importance in men's minds which it never has assumed yet. But I think that Christians will greatly need the teaching of prophecy to keep them from being misled. There are events, as I believe, to happen at Jerusalem, which will deceive those who neglect this portion of God's word. In what order they will happen I cannot discover. When they will happen I do not know. How they

can all be combined I would not attempt to determine. But I think reasons enough have been given, in the preceding chapters, for believing that Jerusalem will be an object of contention to the nations of the earth—"A burdensome stone to all nations"—that it will become the possession of that antichristian power so often spake[n] of in Scripture, into which the Roman empire was to be developed, consisting of ten kingdoms, ruled by a false king as head, and a false priest as its lying prophet, which we have seen exhibiting itself in the Papal kingdoms of Europe for twelve hundred years and more, but which will not reach its culminating point till the tabernacle of its palaces are placed between the seas in the glorious holy mountain, when the false priest will perform miracles before the false king, and make all that dwell on the earth, whose names are not written in the Lamb's book of life, to worship him ; that under the guidance of this false king and false priest, there will be a council at Jerusalem for the settlement of all ecclesiastical questions ; and that the Protestant churches will be deceived, or coerced into attending it, which will issue in the suppression of ecclesiastical Protestantism and the persecution of individual faithful Christians ; that either before or after this, or more probably at the same time, the Jews will be restored to their own land in unbelief, and be deceived into accepting Antichrist as their long looked for Messiah ; and that the delusion will be so great, caused by lying miracles—by the apparent fulfilment of prophecy in Jerusalem's greatness in the eyes of those who have not carefully studied it and understood it, and by the sudden peace and splendour of this last phase of ungodliness—as to be too strong for any but God's own elect. That such events

are to happen some day at Jerusalem, appears to me matter of distinct revelation. That they may happen soon, the present aspect of affairs makes by no means improbable. There is not one of them at the present moment unlikely, however wild the thought may have seemed to some when spoken of years ago. And, which is still more important, there is not one of these events which would not be hailed by multitudes with joy. An European crusade to rescue the holy places from pollution, and the Christians from massacre, what could be said against it? The removal of the Papacy from Rome, how satisfactory to many Protestants; his planting at Jerusalem, how natural a solution of a difficult question. What more popular than an universal agreement to meet at Jerusalem, and put an end to ecclesiastical strife and troublesome debates about doctrine. And if there is a kingly arm strong enough to enforce obedience, or terrify into compliance, what more probable? Do not let us be blind to the fact that Jerusalem may and will rise into great pre-eminence before her day of glory comes, and that she will be a curse to the earth before she is a blessing. "Take heed that no man deceive you. There shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they should deceive the very elect. Watch, therefore, and pray always that ye may be counted worthy to escape those things which shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man."

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate;

and verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see me until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

Our Lord recounts the former sins of that city: "Thou killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee." There is a continuity in God's dealings with nations and cities. On another occasion Jesus said, that of that generation should be required all the righteous blood which had been shed, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zacharias the son of Barachias, whom they slew between the temple and the altar. On this occasion, he charges Jerusalem with the acts of bygone ages, just as Stephen did on his defence: "Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted?" And, in truth, if God did not so deal with nations and cities, he could not deal with them at all. They change from day to day, but God looks on them as one. Jerusalem summed up all her other sins in her rejection of Jesus. But she had been rejecting him all along. The prophets were sent by him, and had foretold of him; and in rejecting them they had rejected him. The prophets speak of the sins of Jerusalem in language of terrible severity. We do not know much of the moral state of Jerusalem while our Lord was there. Perhaps it was not so bad as in Ezekiel's day. Idolatry had been forsaken. There was more attention to outward ordinances. But for all that, Jerusalem was rotten to the core, and showed it at last, when that cry was heard, "Crucify him! crucify him." And we must not forget how quickly that cry followed another—how the same multitudes had a few days before said, "Hosanna to the Son of David." Who could have imagined so rapid a transition. Some must have

thought Jerusalem very near a general conversion when even the children in the temple cried "Hosanna!" But he who knew all hearts was not deceived. It was still the same Jerusalem that killed the prophets, and stoned them that were sent unto her.

But what longsuffering in Christ towards Jerusalem! "How often would I have gathered thee!" This does not apply only to his personal ministry, but to his invitations through the prophets. It was distinctively the Son who sent the prophets. He rose up early, as it is elsewhere expressed, and sent them. It was his loving purpose to do good to Jerusalem. "How often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings." Message after message had come and been disregarded. He saw approaching danger, and he would have shielded her from it, "as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings." There was an affectionate longing on his part, and an obstinate refusal on their part. He bore with them from time to time. He constantly repeated his invitation. You know how the hen spreads out her wings, and encircles her brood under that safe covering. So he was willing to fold them under his feathers, but it was all in vain—"Ye would not."

Alas for Jerusalem!—"your house is left unto you desolate." When he himself quitted it its glory departed. It was the distinction of that house above the others that he himself walked in it. His presence made it bright. And when he was gone, though the sacrifices were still offered, and the appointed rites gone through, it was really desolate. But it is not only this to which he was referring—he was looking forward to that which on another occasion he minutely describes.

"Thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and encompass thee round and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee. And they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another, because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation." It was to this same event our Lord was looking forward. Desolation was to come on city and on temple, and those who had rejected the Saviour must remain without him many days. And oh! how desolate has Jerusalem been. Even now she is a proverb and a by-word; placed in the very centre of the habitable globe, she remains still under a curse, her people driven into all nations, and herself downtrodden and oppressed while the Mosque of Omar stands on the site of the temple of Solomon. We cannot well exaggerate the miserable condition of that city, especially when viewed at once temporally and religiously. Desolation characterizes her. She is not like many an ancient city, a splendid wreck of bygone greatness. Rome has its Forum, its Colosseum, its Capitol—Palmyra its columns in the desert. But all is meanness at Jerusalem—its remains defiled with idols—its inhabitants a reproach, fully justifying the poet's words—

"Now brought to bondage with her sons,
A shame and grief to see;
Jerusalem, Jerusalem,
My soul still weeps for thee."

Jerusalem's time is coming. Not, as I believe, till she has sinned again and suffered again. But at last her time will come. There will come a time when Jewish inhabitants of Jerusalem will say to him whom their fathers crucified, "Blessed is he that cometh in the

name of the Lord ; ” and when that time shall come, then the day of Jerusalem’s glory will have dawned. ‘ Then the sun shall be ashamed, and the moon confounded, when the Lord of hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously.’ ” And not till then. “ Verily, I say unto you, ye shall not see me until ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.”

God’s dealings with Jerusalem are in some respects special, in other respects a model. And when we see what he has done to Jerusalem how can we help asking ourselves, what will he do to London ?

This is a wicked city. With much of gilding on the surface, there is rottenness within. It does not touch the point, whether it is better or worse than in the time of our fathers. We and our fathers have sinned. Sin of every description has been and is still rampant among us. Sins most hateful to God are neither repressed by authority nor discomfited by society. I fear that in the eye of God this city is steeped in iniquity. Deceit, fraud, commercial dishonesty, drunkenness, Sabbath-breaking, licentiousness run down its streets like water. Robbery and fornication are notrowned upon or compelled to hide themselves, but are tolerated vices where the guilt is greatest. There is inexorable justice for the less guilty, and perfect immunity for the more guilty. In some things laws are powerless—judges are powerless—parliaments are powerless—sovereigns are powerless, but public opinion is all powerful. There are faults in our laws, in our judges, and our parliaments. We have sinned, from the queen on the throne to the meanest of her subjects. But in these matters it is public opinion which is wrong.

—the national sentiment is corrupted, and more especially the mind of this great city. We are the heart of the nation, and the life-blood is poisoned as it passes through. I know of no place in which there is so much godliness as in London, but I know of none in which there is so much sin—I mean in England. Rome Pagan was worse than Jerusalem when Jesus spoke, and Rome Papal is worse than London now. But I doubt whether London now is better than Jerusalem of old. I fear, if a Jeremiah was among us, he would say, “Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughters of my people ! Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging-place of wayfaring-men, that I might leave my people and go from them, for they be all adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men. And they bend their tongues like their bow for lies ; but they are not valiant for the truth upon the earth, for they proceed from evil to evil, and they know not me, saith the Lord. . . . And they will deceive every one his neighbour, and will not speak the truth ; they have taught their tongue to speak lies, and weary themselves to commit iniquity.” Is there a word there which is not true literally of London ? We may shut our eyes to the fact—we may look only at one side of the case. But the real honest truth is this, that this London in which we live is a very wicked city.

The Lord has been longsuffering to London. It was a wicked city in the days of our fathers, but he spared it. His truth was little known, and he sent his ministers to preach it. An old man may remember when the pulpits might be easily counted in which

Christ's Gospel was preached. Not only did God spare London when every other capital in Europe felt the scourge of an invading army, but he sent his word in rich abundance. It is all delusion now to attribute the sins of London to the want of Christian teaching. In every conceivable way the Gospel has been preached in this great city. In churches and chapels, and school-rooms—in the open air, from street to street, and lane to lane, and court to court—in drawing-rooms, assembly-rooms, theatres, men have been warned, besought to be reconciled to God.

And God has been more gracious still. He has stirred up his people to pray, and answered their prayers by making his word effectual. In most wonderful ways he has shown his power; and this is known to be so. It is not unknown that God is working—not quite as we expected, nor quite as we hope it will be. London is not moved. But within this city Christ is gathering souls—he is showing his willingness to receive the worst and the vilest, and saying to London at large in deeds what he said to Jerusalem in words: O London, London! where of old so many martyrs have been burned, how often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not.

Will London be made desolate? If there were no danger, our statesmen and soldiers would not be discussing how best to defend this city. I find no intimation in prophecy distinct either way. I do not know whether, humanly speaking, we are prepared or not, for what may happen; but of this I am very sure, that there is quite enough of warning to make it a most solemn question. We have been stripped by steam

navigation of that in which we once trusted to be to us instead of bulwarks and towers. No one who does not shut his eyes doubts that there is the will, if there is the power, to deal the fatal blow. And when I think of the sins of this great city, and God's unheeded calls on this great city, and on the haste with which Christ is gathering individual souls in this great city, I ask myself, Are we better than Jerusalem? And if not, why should not we share her fate? Sure I am that unless God be with us none of our plans will save us. This, which is the last thing thought of, should be the first. Without him our ships may moulder in the docks—without him our yet unbuilt walls may be broken down by a fox—without him our bravest may be like the children of Ephraim, who, being harnessed and carrying bows, turned themselves back in the day of battle—without him this city may become a desolation, and our houses of prayer be defiled with idols. With him we have a wall of fire all round us. Which will it be?

"I would have gathered thy children together as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings." Even so has Christ been gathering precious souls. How graciously, how lovingly. When the hen sees danger, then she spreads out her wings to embrace her little ones. How many have been nestling in safety under Christ's everlasting wings.

If you ever watched a brood of little ones at a distance from the hen, you have sometimes seen a panic seize them. They run in all directions, till the fluttering wings of the parent bird, and her voice of invitation, attract them to her. Or, perhaps, this may be the first note of warning from the hen, more watchful than her brood.

And so it is with souls. Some are first greatly alarmed, and go from place to place to find shelter. Anxious to escape from the wrath to come, they look all around them for a hiding-place. Each hiding-place fails them, till at last he calls them to him, and they hide under his feathers. They leave all trust in themselves, or in others, to place their trust in Jesus. How deep the rest of rest in Jesus. Torn, wounded, disquieted, the soul finds fulness of peace in him. No more occasion for dreading the wrath to come, since he is as able as willing to shield you from it. Nothing can hurt him who is safe in Jesus.

And some are first attracted by the voice of Jesus. He draws them into safety, and then shows them the longer they have escaped from. He makes his call effectual. He puts into it power to move the heart and constrain the will. As it was with Ruth when she clave to Naomi, and felt her voice so attractive that she said, "Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest I will go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God. Where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried; the Lord do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me." Oh, there is many a heart which has been drawn to Jesus by a golden band. The voice of affection has won her, and half unconscious of the danger she was escaping she has come to trust under the shadow of his wings.

"But ye would not." It was so then—it is so now. It is, after all, the few who come—the many keep way. "Ye will not come unto me," said Jesus. He says so still. He wants you, he is seeking you, he is ready to save you as a hen her brood. But you must come to him.

Some are looking about in all directions for a hiding-place. You will do anything except the one thing which is needful. That one thing is to hide yourself in him—to nestle your soul under his wings—to find shelter in his everlasting love. Trembling and wearied you may come, and will meet with no repulse. He is calling for you. Your danger and weakness makes him long to save you. He is willing—are not you? You are in constant peril while you remain at a distance. There is no safety but in him. Hide, hide yourself in him now while there is yet time. How many have found refuge there—why should not you?

“Lord, I hear of showers of blessing
Thou art scattering full and free;
Showers, the thirsty land refreshing;
Let some droppings fall on me—
Even me.

“Pass me not, O God, our Father!
Sinful though my heart may be;
Thou might’st leave me, but the rather
Let thy mercy light on me—
Even me.

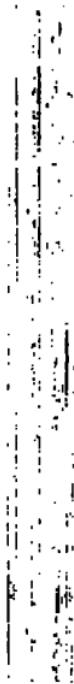
“Pass me not, O gracious Saviour!
Let me live and cling to thee;
Fain I’m longing for thy favour:
Whilst thou’rt calling, oh! call me—
Even me.

“Pass me not, O mighty Spirit!
Thou canst make the blind to see;
Witnesser of Jesus’ merit,
Speak the word of power to me—
Even me.

“Have I long in sin been sleeping,
Long been slighting, grieving thee?
Has the world my heart been keeping?
Oh! forgive and rescue me—
Even me.

“Love of God—so pure and changeless;
Blood of Christ—so rich and free;
Grace of God—so strong and boundless,
Magnify it all in me!
Even me.

“Pass me not—thy lost one bringing;
Bind my heart, O Lord, to thee;
Whilst the streams of life are springing,
Blessing others, oh bless me!—
Even me.”



APPENDIX.

APPENDIX I.

THE CHRONOLOGY OF "ARMAGEDDON."

SINCE writing a large portion of this book, I have read "Armageddon," which was not, I believe, then published. I cannot say how much I admire that work, with which, on the whole, I agree more than with any other. But, after carefully considering the point, I remain of the same opinion as to the historical interpretation of the chronological periods. The author of "Armageddon" places the commencement of the 1260 days at the Edict of Justinian, A.D. 529, and their termination in A.D. 1789, and assumes the same commencement for the 1290 and 1335 days with the 1260; and, in common with most modern commentators, considers the three days and a-half as, in their historical signification, past. My reasons for differing from him, on this last point, appear in Chapter X. But with respect to the 1290 and 1335 days, it seems to me that it is a mere assumption that their commencement synchronizes with that of the 1260 days.

The 1260 days are not expressed in days at all in Daniel, but in the phrase, "a time, times, and a-half;" and this period is either the time of the end, or the

time to the end, as we translate verse 6, "How long shall be the end of these wonders?" or, "How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?" I believe the word "time," as already stated, to be intentionally ambiguous, expressing either a year of natural days, or of prophetical days. But, in either case, I see no reason for saying that the "time, times, and a-half" must commence with the 1290 and 1335 days. The silence of Scripture on the subject appears to me to imply the reverse. It is a fair inference that if the commencement of one period is mentioned, and that of another not mentioned, there is some reason for the difference. In my view Daniel marks the leading epochs of Church history as seen in God's eye : first, Wickliff, the morning star of the Reformation ; secondly, John Huss, its dawn ; thirdly, the close of the Church's tribulation, giving the exact date of the two former, but only the approximate date of the latter, as gathered from the length of the period, and our own judgment as to its commencement in the somewhat indefinite rise of the Papacy.

It does not seem likely that, especially in Daniel, "the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up," should express the rise of the Papacy. Our Lord himself interprets it of the Roman eagles standing on the holy places, which surely is decisive.

And it is also to be observed that if these three periods do really commence together, and the termination of the 1335 days is the beginning of Christ's reign, it follows, necessarily, that wherever we place the termination of the 1260 years, there must be 75 years following it, during which the exact date of the

millennium, and therefore of Christ's advent, will be known—subject only to any mistake in fixing the commencement of the Papacy. Accordingly, in "Armageddon," the supposed date of Christ's advent is given. Surely the possibility of doing so on the theory, is a strong objection to the theory itself, and especially to the supposition, which seems to involve this possibility, that the 1290 and 1335 days have the same commencement with the 1260. But then, if these additional 75 years disappear, as on the view here taken they do, we cannot assign the year 1789 as the conclusion of the 1260 days. Facts contradict it. And there is this other serious objection to it, that in the time of Justinian the beast had not developed all his ten horns.

I wish also to notice that my interpretation and that of "Armageddon" each, by a different method, bring out three years and a-half of persecution before the close of the dispensation. In my view this is the historical or year-day fulfilment of the three days and a-half, and the secondary solution of the three times and a-half, and forty-two months. In "Armageddon," this period of persecution has nothing to do with the three days and a-half, of which the year-day fulfilment is supposed to be past, but is the day-day fulfilment of the three times and a-half, the forty-two months, and the 1260 days.

Without entering on the consideration of that general double interpretation of chronological prophecy adopted, with some exceptions, in "Armageddon," I believe that in Daniel we have dates expressed in days which are to be interpreted in years, and a date expressed in "times" which contains the length of the time of the end, or long tribulation, measured in years,

and also of the last tribulation measured in days; and that, similarly, in the *Apocalypse*, we have two periods given in days to be interpreted as years, and also a period given in months coinciding with both, and with the “time, times, and a half” of Daniel in each of its meanings, as 1260 years, and three years and a-half. Whether the three years and a-half in Daniel relate to the last tribulation of the Church, as in *Revelation*, or to the last tribulation of Judah, I am doubtful; perhaps to both.

APPENDIX II.

A PAPER has been published under the title, “Garibaldi on the Present State of Europe.” The more I consider it, the less likely does it seem to me to be the genuine writing of that noble-minded man whose sympathies are not in favour of French Imperial government. But, whoever wrote it, it sketches out the course of events in remarkable agreement with the *Apocalypse*, numbering the ten horns, and assigning the headship.

“Let us frame a supposition. Let us suppose Europe to form only one state. Who would think of disturbing its unity? To whom would the idea occur, I ask, of disturbing the peace of Europe—this sovereign of the world?

* * * * *

“Who, then, is to take the initiative in this great work? Who but the country that marches in the van of the revolution?

“The idea of a European confederation—projected by the Chief of the French empire, and which would spread security and happiness throughout the world—

is it not better than all these political combinations that daily torment and agitate this poor people?

* * * * *

“The rivalry that has existed between France and England from the fourteenth century to our time still exists, but at the present day with infinitely less intensity; and we state this for the glory of human progress; so that a transaction between the two greatest nations of Europe—a transaction having for its object the weal of humanity, can no longer be placed among the dreams and Utopian schemes of sanguine men.

“Therefore, the basis of a European confederation is naturally traced out by France and England. Let France and England frankly and loyally join hands, and Italy, Spain, Portugal, Hungary, Belgium, Switzerland, Greece, and Roumelia will come of their own accord, instinctively, I may say, to range themselves around them.

“In short, all the divided and oppressed nationalities, the Sclavonic, Celtic, Germanic, Scandinavian races—including gigantic Russia—would not choose to remain apart from this political regeneration, to which they are called by the genius of the age.”

* * * * *

APPENDIX III.

THE ABBÉ MICHON ON THE PAPACY AT JERUSALEM.

*Extracts from a book entitled “La Papauté à Jérusalem,”
par L’Abbé J. H. Michon. Paris, 1856.*

I HAVE thought it well to give some extracts from

this book, which made a great noise in Paris some time since, but, though largely quoted from in the *Times* newspaper, is not, I believe, in circulation in England.

“An old idea has prevailed in the West since the invasion of Palestine by the Moslems—that of conquering Jerusalem, and putting Christians in possession of the holy places. So irresistible did this thought become in the 11th century, that it drew formidable armies to the East, and Europe gave itself neither peace nor truce till it had founded the Frank kingdom of Jerusalem. * * * *

“We are asked, on the supposition of grave events happening to make the existence of the Papacy as a temporal power impossible, what would be the result of restoring it in the East, as centre and director of the religious movement of the world? Having witnessed so many efforts, resulting in nothing of importance, in the West, tossed about by its strong desire of changes, we have looked to see if there were not a splendid rôle for this magistracy of Christendom, which we venerate under the name of the Papacy, in that Holy Land so long depopulated and dishonoured by barbarians.

“We know that the glory of an Eastern apostleship has been the dearest dream of Pius IX., who, as soon as he became Pope, determined that one of the first acts of his administration should be an appeal to the Eastern Churches to break the last obstacles which keep them outside the unity of the Church.

“If the thoughts unfolded in this work on the brilliant future opening itself to the spiritual and imperishable Papacy in that East, whence have shone the purest

glories which have beamed on humanity, are but an Utopia and a dream, this Utopia itself is still a homage to the Papacy, since we deem that nothing great happens in any age without its being the centre, where meet all the efforts of man's mind to raise the religious and moral world from its degradation. * * *

"To render the residence of the Pope out of Italy perfectly consistent with his independence and greatness, the Apostolic See should be translated into a neutral city, free from all the political complications of the West, where, after its long sorrows, the Papacy may commence a new era of fruitful apostleship.

"Now, out of Europe no other city would be more suitable for the Apostolic See than the holy city, Jerusalem.

"This seemingly strange project, though by reason of its very strangeness it was likely to have been thrown aside by those whose special province it is to discuss it, has nevertheless gained serious attention among statesmen, and been adopted as an honourable solution, should impossibilities of all kinds surround the Papacy in Italy, and oblige it to choose a new See.

"During the year 1855, while the war in the East was raging, and there were fears of a complication of affairs in Europe, this proposal was made to the Papal Government. Entire liberty of action was guaranteed to the Sovereign Pontiff at Jerusalem; the means of sustaining his high dignity in an honourable manner were promised him; a railroad from Jerusalem to Jaffa would have rendered the communications of the Papacy with Europe as rapid as from Rome itself. * *

"Then the Papacy protected by all the Christian powers would yet be independent of them, in a neutral

country, and independent of the sovereign of that country, by the high guarantee of those same powers whose great religious interests it governs.

" What a novel position for the Sovereign Pontiff before the Catholic world ! It would have the immense advantage of not imposing on him the harassing cares of a temporal domain, and so giving him up altogether to his grand apostolic mission. At one stroke religious interests and political interests would be divorced. So long as the present state of things continues the Pope is but a vassal. The powers which occupy his territory can, when they please, announce to him their will. He is not master of his subjects—he is not master of himself. * * * But at Jerusalem his Papal independence would be complete.

* * * * *

" Do we at last understand that the ideal of greatness would be that of the Pope released from his earthly sovereignty, and reassuming the Divine Sovereignty of Christ in the very cradle of Christianity ?

* * * * *

" What would be the new action of the Papacy on the world under these circumstances ?

" And, first, would it lose its power of acting on the West ? It would hold it a thousand times more thoroughly. What is the constant reproach thrown on the Pope in consequence of his relations with the subjects of different powers ? That of being a foreign potentate. We have seen certain legislatures forbid intercourse with the Pope, on the ground of his being a foreign potentate ; religious bodies have been threatened or persecuted because they obey a foreign potentate. This reproach would lose all plausibility. The relation of

the common father of the faithful with the world could no longer be suspected, disengaged as they would be from the trammels of political interests. Instead of being taunted with the name of foreign potentate, he would be simply head of the great family of the faithful.

* * * * *

"It is easy to perceive what facilities the presence of the Sovereign Pontiff in the East would afford to the grand scheme for the union of the Churches; the residence of the vicar of Jesus Christ in the holy city, the object of such great veneration to the Eastern Churches would gratify those Churches, whose legitimate pride it is to trace themselves back to the apostolic age, and whose beautiful liturgies are so interesting a proof of the perpetuity of the great dogmas on which Catholicism rests.

"There is in the present age, in the eyes of thoughtful and impartial men, no other possible solution of the question of the schism of the East than this—

"1. The abandonment of all dogmatic polemics with the Easterns, as only irritating and utterly useless.

"2. An agreement with them as to the necessity of an union of the two Churches, carefully preserving to the East their prized ceremonials.

"3. The solemn proclamation by official acts of this union, on the basis of the identity of doctrines, and of the indisputable historical fact, that the last decree of union proclaimed at Florence has never been canonically revoked.

"4. The convocation, with the help of the Patriarchs, Archbishops, and Bishops of the Churches of the East and the West so united, of an ecumenical council to

reform the abuses which have crept in during the course of ages, and to bring the discipline of the Church, both Eastern and Western, into harmony with the instincts and necessities of modern society, to do which has in all ages been the very spirit of the Church.

"A plan of union made on such a basis appears to us quite capable of being realized, and that in the short space of ten years.

* * * * *

"We have here to submit some important considerations on the results of the reunion of the Eastern Churches with Rome. May one not suppose that this grand fact would have its influence on the sects of the West, which call themselves Christians, but are completely separated from the unity of the Church, and reject the Papacy which is its centre, when they find themselves thoroughly isolated, without that powerful bond which is the source of all moral strength in the world, in face of a Catholicism growing young again and bearing fresh fruit?

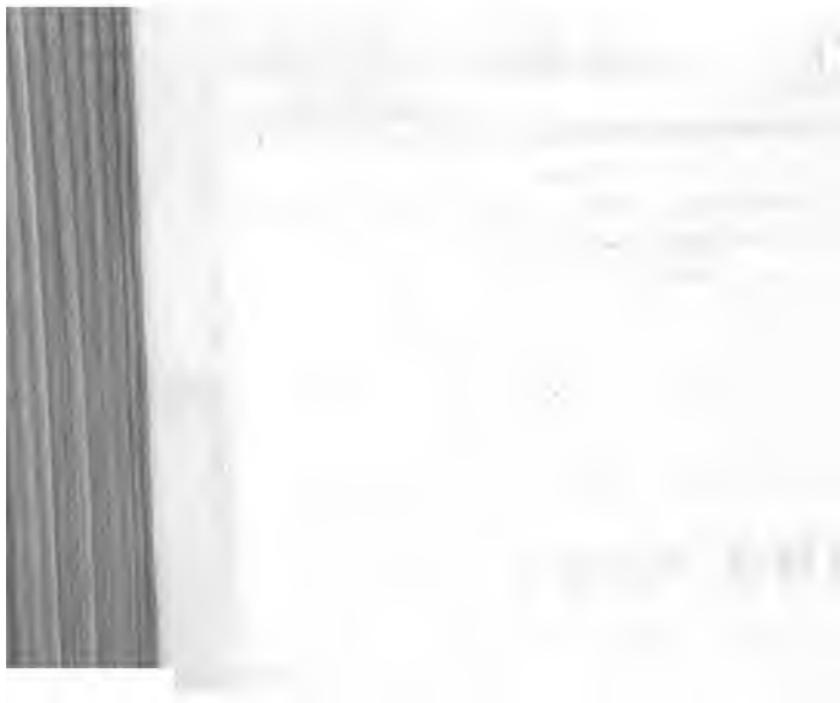
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"We have kept out of this work all notice of our efforts for the establishment of Christian colonies in the Holy Land. This project, the peaceful crusade of the nineteenth century, would receive a great impetus from the presence of the Pope at Jerusalem. With such rapid steam communications, more perfect every day, the possession of a domain, or a little villa in the Holy Land, would become the dream of many a soul, whom, in our Europe, a feverish and intoxicating civilization oppresses like a nightmare. What glory for a Pope, without shedding one drop of blood, and by the rational method of colonization, to have accomplished the pur-

pose of those crusades of which so many generations were so passionately fond."

I need not point out the bearing of these extracts on the interpretation of prophecy given in this volume. I had arrived at those views before seeing the Abbé Michon's book, and felt startled on reading it to find the very scheme mapped out by a French Roman Catholic Abbé, which I considered myself to have previously read in the Apocalypse, as the course of events out of which the last tribulation of the Church was to arise.

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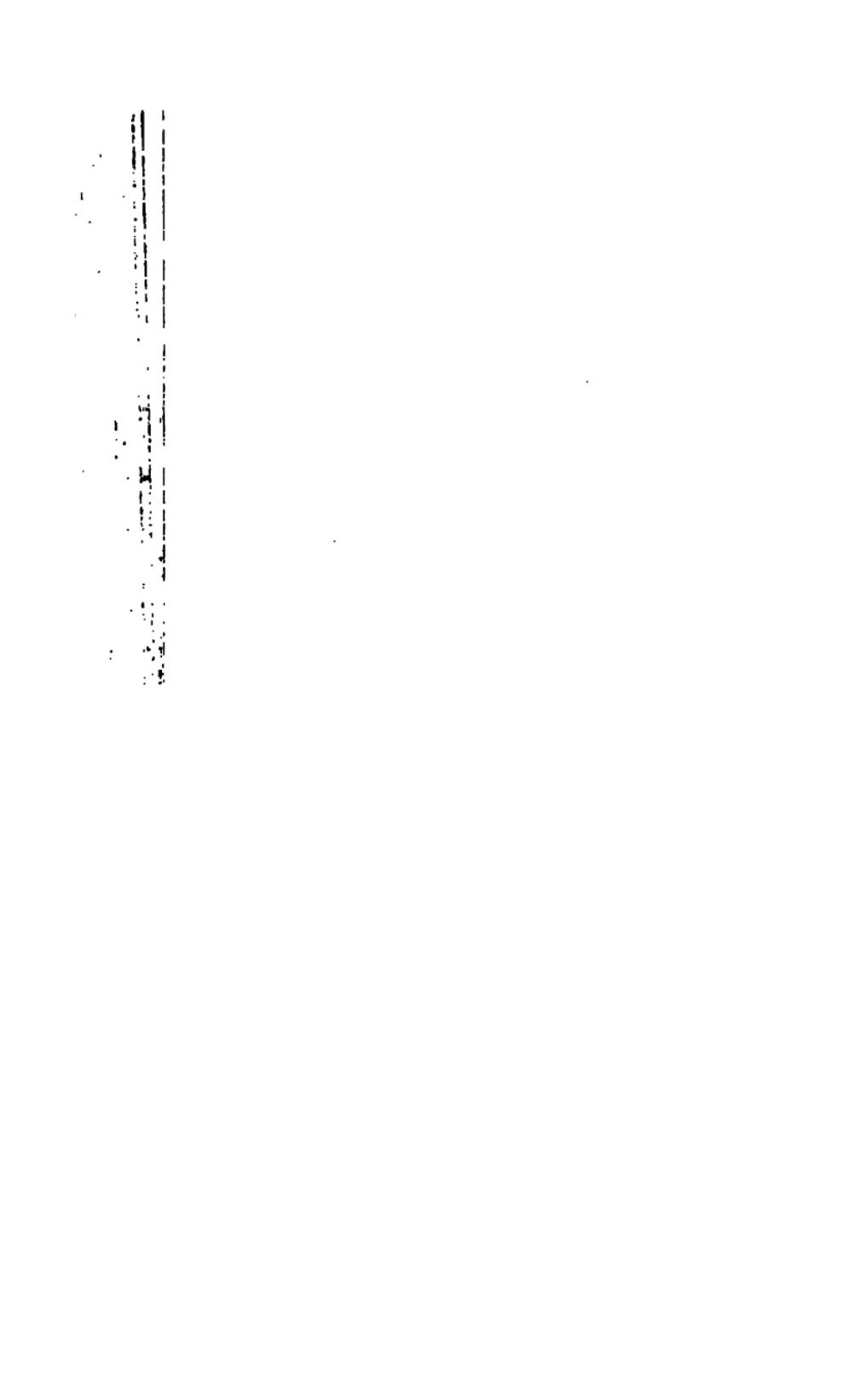
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